

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Social Work,
University of Stellenbosch



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December 2002

Declaration

I the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work and that it has not been submitted previously in its entirety or in part to any other university for a degree.

Signed:.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the social development approach from the viewpoint of developing an understanding of the applicability thereof in a social work environment in a South African context.

Based on the level of underdevelopment in the country, the social development process, which involves a dynamic multi-disciplinary approach with a strong emphasis on the positive outcomes of growth and empowerment, is thought to offer a wide range of possible fields of application.

To provide clarity and gain insight into the dimensions and elements involved, different aspects of the South African and international scenarios provide a background for the arguments promoting the social development approach as a positive intervention for the helping professions.

The purpose of this research is to broaden the field of knowledge for practitioners and organisations dealing with poverty and deprivation by providing an extension of options in practice models.

The research report includes an investigation of the elements and concepts associated with social development, with particular emphasis on the role of women. Knowledge and understanding of these concepts will assist in widening the horizons of field workers and assist in deciding on appropriate responses when faced with the problems of South Africa and its apartheid legacy.

Development in the South African context is examined with the focus on the main role players, namely government and the welfare sector. Recurring themes in development programmes that have been identified as elements for success are described by means of case examples from good international

practice models. The applicability of many of these cases should serve as stimuli for instituting initiatives in local situations of need.

The empirical research used the qualitative method to examine, by means of focus groups, the effects of the identified elements in five social development projects in the Western Cape. The focus groups were conducted with the aid of open-ended question guides. The findings and responses of the focus group respondents were analysed and discussed in relation to findings described in the literature by various authors.

It is believed that the findings of this research can be utilised as practical guidelines for instituting and running social development projects by social workers, as well as practitioners from other fields, to address the problems of poverty and underdevelopment in the country by paying special attention to the role of women in such projects.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsing ondersoek die maatskaplike ontwikkeling benadering met die oog daarop om 'n begrip te kry van die toepaslikheid daarvan in 'n maatskaplike werkomgewing in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks.

Die toestand van onderontwikkeling in die land het tot gevolg dat die maatskaplike ontwikkelingsproses, wat 'n sterk multi-dissiplinêre benadering behels en positiewe gevolge van groei en bemagtiging beklemtoon, waarskynlik 'n wye veld van toepassingsgeleenthede bied.

Ten einde duidelikheid en insig te kry oor die omvang van die veld en die beginsels wat ter sprake is, word die argumente wat die maatskaplike ontwikkeling benadering ondersteun teen die agtergrond van verskillende aspekte van Suid-Afrikaanse en internasionale toestande bespreek.

Die doel van die navorsing is om die kennisveld van maatskaplike werk en organisasies wat te doen het met armoede en verwaarlosing te verbreed en die keuses van praktykmodelle uit te brei.

Die navorsingsverslag sluit 'n ondersoek in van konsepte en elemente waarmee maatskaplike ontwikkeling geassosieer word, met die klem op die rol van vroue. Kennis en begrip van die toepassing van hierdie konsepte sal veldwerkers se horisonne verbreed en help met besluitneming oor gepaste diensleweringmodelle wanneer met die probleme van Suid-Afrika en die gevolge van apartheid gekonfronteer word.

Ontwikkeling in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks word ondersoek met die klem op die hoof rolspelers in die veld, nl. die regering en die welsynsektor.

Herhalende temas in internasionale ontwikkelingsprogramme as elemente van sukses is geïdentifiseer en word beskryf d.m.v. gevallestudies van internasionale goeie praktyke.

Die toepaslikheid van baie van hierdie gevallestudies behoort as aanmoediging te dien vir inisiatiewe op plaaslike vlak.

Vir die empiriese ondersoek, is gebruik gemaak van die kwalitatiewe metode om, d.m.v. fokusgroepe by vyf projekte in die Wes-Kaap, die effektiwiteit van die geïdentifiseerde elemente vir sukses te toets. Die fokusgroepe is gelei aan die hand van 'n oop vraelys.

Die reaksies van die deelnemers aan die fokusgroep is verwerk en in die konteks van die literatuurstudie bespreek.

Dit word aanvaar dat die bevindings van die navorsing deur maatskaplike werkers en ander dissiplines gebruik kan word as praktiese riglyne by die beplanning en loodsing van maatskaplike ontwikkeling projekte in die bekamping van armoede en onderontwikkeling, met spesiale aandag aan die rol van vroue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards the costs of this research is acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions reached are those of the author and are no reflection of the opinions or conclusions of the NRF.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation for the study

The dramatic political changes that took place in South Africa during the 1990's have led to a considerable increase in awareness of both the vast economic as well as social inequalities that exist in the country. It is estimated that, although considered a middle-income country, income disparities are among the most extreme in the world (The World Bank Group, 2000:1).

In an attempt to address these disparities and inequalities, the government has accepted transformation as a priority responsibility for its policies and programmes.

An important policy direction in this regard has been the publication of The White Paper for Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997). With its emphasis on the social development perspective, it provides the policy framework for developmental welfare services and, in effect, can be seen as a watershed for welfare services and social work in the country.

The change in perspective and practice that this implies would seem to require something of a paradigm shift in the social welfare field.

This is hinted at in an article comparing welfare policies and functions of the present government with those of the previous regime (Van Eeden, Ryke and De Necker, 2000). The authors refer to a debate on how developmental social welfare should be understood and state that, although the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) provides the policy framework, the development concept is not clearly grasped as a model in the social welfare field. However,

it is conceded and being acknowledged "that welfare would be achieved through development" (Van Eeden *et al.* 2000:17).

Some clues for coordinating and integrating social welfare with economic development goals are provided by the social development approach for needy communities elaborated on by Midgley (1995:157), with the proviso that agencies for social services and those promoting economic development should work together closely.

To integrate social and economic policies would be advantageous for various reasons, but social welfare policies and practices would benefit particularly from such partnering, as it could lead to improved living conditions and improved quality of life for poor and underprivileged clients.

It would appear that the partnership concept, which implies different role players working together for a common goal in such communities, might seem relevant to achieve the goals set out in the social welfare policy. This may present a challenge to welfare practitioners and organisations, as it requires different strategies and new ways of 'doing things', as well as changes in practices and attitudes.

The role of women in development has been receiving worldwide acknowledgement, giving rise to numerous studies, conferences and programmes of the World Bank and the United Nations (UN), amongst others. This trend is spelled out in a UN study on Good Practices (2000: 47) that reminds its readers that all developmental activities in all fields can "impact on and benefit from the experience and knowledge of women".

Welfare services that promote "the dignity, self-esteem and wellbeing of women" and address their development are a clear strategy guideline spelled out in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:48). The White Paper also indicates a need for research to formulate policy on the empowerment of women.

Future roles and competencies that would be expected of social workers in a changed South African environment were identified by Van Zyl (1989:275), who recommended that research should be encouraged to develop clarity on the knowledge and skill requirements for future roles.

Another author (Rankin, 1997), writing about the challenges brought about by the transformation of the welfare system, indicated that the mindsets of social workers would have to change to ensure that the profession is not marginalised in the new dispensation, which focuses on a developmental approach. Research that would take into account social development experiences from the 'Third World', and particularly from Africa, was recommended to augment existing social work knowledge and practices (Rankin, 1997:190).

Support for the need for research is also found in a review in a South African publication on development (Midgley & Livermore 2000:59), which states that "there is an urgent need for South African (*social*) workers to show how the profession is contributing to the formulation and implementation of a development perspective that will enhance the wellbeing of the country's people. Social workers in other parts of the world are eager to learn and benefit from these efforts."

The researcher is of the opinion that funding that targets the development and social welfare of women can be an important mechanism to address social ills and promote social development. Consequently this study investigated best practices that can contribute to successful social development programmes.

The findings and conclusions emanating from the study would be helpful to determine policy and practice directions for institutions such as government, and parastatals, private sector organisations and funders, as well as those welfare organisations involved in or contemplating social development projects.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The **aim** of the study was to present guidelines for organisations and practitioners in the fields of social welfare, social work and social development, to implement and manage programmes aimed at the social development and welfare of women.

The following **objectives** have been formulated to achieve this aim

- ❖ To describe the nature and dimensions of the empowerment of women from a social development perspective
- ❖ To identify criteria considered good practice for improving the chances of success when implementing development programmes aimed at women
- ❖ To describe the experiences of women involved in a few Western Cape projects in terms of these criteria.

1.3 Demarcation of the field of study

The Western Cape provincial department of Social Services, under its Directorate of Developmental Social Welfare, has 21 district offices from which social welfare services are rendered. These district offices are also responsible for allocating funds to train beneficiaries in income-generating skills following the phasing-out of the State Maintenance Grant scheme.

Information was obtained from four of these district offices about social development projects in their areas.

Information about such projects was also obtained from the Foundation for Community Work (FCW), a local non governmental organisation (NGO).

The researcher selected four projects from the information supplied by the Department of Social Services and one from the information obtained from FCW. Three of the projects were in urban and two in rural areas.

1.4 Research methodology

The research design of the study can be described as exploratory and descriptive, as it dealt with a research area about which not much is known in this country, namely an understanding of the success factors in social development projects (Grinnell in De Vos 1998:124). Grinnell also explains that exploratory research is suitable when the area of research is not well developed and therefore it is more “sensible” to apply this design as a method of inquiry (1988:225). Thus, as basic research, the focus of the study was to explore and describe dimensions and aspects of social development, to identify success factors as themes in social development projects and to describe the experiences of women in terms of these themes and thereby meeting the aim and objectives of the study.

A literature review and an empirical study were undertaken to deal with the purpose of this research.

The researcher undertook a focused study of literature on social welfare, empowerment and gender-focused social development as well as of literature on development from related disciplines. Available and relevant sources, such as articles, reports and papers from organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations, including research documents, journal articles, books, media reports and government publications, were studied and utilised.

Study material was obtained from various libraries as well as from the Internet.

Books and other publications dealing with social research methods and approaches were also studied.

After weighing up and exploring both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches, it was decided that the qualitative approach was more appropriate for this study, reading was focused on this method. The reason for selecting the qualitative approach was determined by the objective of the study, namely to understand and **describe** experiences of women involved in social development projects, thereby to “enhance the effectiveness”... *and raise...the standard of professional practice*” of the helping professions (Schurink, 1998:248).

Useful insights were gained from, amongst others, the writings of Hall and Hall (1996), who proclaim that social research projects also have to be of value to the client organisations, referring to the concepts of collaboration and partnerships, while their discussions on utilising groups for interviewing was particularly valuable (1996:159).

Some of the other writers who provided meaningful guidelines were Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Miles and Huberman (1994), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Punch (1998) and Dooley (1995).

To stimulate thought, but also to help gain perspective, Neuman (2000:420) provided practical and useful help by making it clear that, in qualitative research, general ideas and themes are often used for making generalisations, rather than using variables and that qualitative analysis can be relatively imprecise as it is in the form of words.

Sample

A non-probability sampling technique was applied.

A **purposive sample** of five development projects was selected from information obtained on social development projects, provided by the Department of Social Services and the Foundation for Community Work (FCW).

The choice of projects in the sample was made on conceptual, not

representative grounds, taking into account their settings and individual processes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; 30 - 31), as well as for practical reasons of accessibility and the time factor. Therefore, the five projects were chosen on account of geographical spread between urban and rural areas, length of time in existence (1 year+), having organisational structures in place and having significant female involvement. The activities of projects included in the sample covered food gardening, pre-school facilities, sewing, craft-making, a bakery, provision of meals, fruit tree groves, handwork and wirework. The project members themselves selected participants for the focus groups with not more than six members per group, to allow for the full participation of all the participants within a reasonable period of time.

A total of 23 women participated in the sample of five groups, while the groups in the sample represented a total of 87 project members.

Introductory visits were made to all five groups prior to the focus group sessions to discuss the purpose and process of the sessions and to obtain permission and cooperation from project members for doing the study.

Method of data collection

Focus groups were chosen as the method for data collection in view of the qualitative data that was required and the 'information rich' way in which "people's feelings, thinking, perceptions and point of view" (Krueger & Casey, 2000:10) can be obtained.

Homogeneous groups, all consisting of members of social development projects, were used to provide data on their experiences of such projects in terms of certain predetermined criteria.

The key characteristic distinguishing focus groups, namely the interaction between the participants to provide information and insight [Gibbs, 1997], was found to be especially beneficial. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:16), who

spell out various advantages of focus groups, such as the interactive way of obtaining information from groups of people in a relatively brief period in cost-effective ways and obtaining results that are easily understood, provide a convincing argument for using focus groups for this study.

Another advantage was the flexibility provided by focus groups, which Morgan (1997:16) points out as possibly being their “greatest strength”. This flexibility provided both the respondents and the researcher with scope to focus discussions, while also adjusting to differences in the composition, interests and levels of sophistication of the different groups.

The benefits to the respondents in the focus groups, indicated by Gibbs [1997] as feeling that they are of value and “involved in something which they feel will make a difference”, thereby leading to a sense of empowerment, was considered a positive byproduct of this method.

Instrument

The focus group sessions were conducted with the aid of an interview guide in the form of semi-structured, open-ended questions (Annexures A and B).

The guide allowed for meticulous and ample note taking of responses on the standardised forms.

The question guide was decided on as the most suitable method for collecting data to cover the topics that the researcher wanted to study and, as pointed out by Miles & Huberman (1994:35), to focus the discussions, thus preventing an overload of extra and unwanted information.

Another benefit of such a questionnaire guide, namely that the same topics of discussion follow the same order for all the groups, was also considered relevant (Morgan, 1997:47).

Using open-ended questions in the question guide was considered most appropriate to obtain information on feelings and views, thus covering a broader field by allowing the respondents more freedom in their choice of responses (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990:74).

The open-ended questions of the guide allowed for variety in individual responses to specific topics, thereby limiting the structural character of the sessions. It also provided the opportunity for discussion amongst group respondents and for the researcher to observe reactions and behaviour.

The questionnaire served as a map for the path to be followed by the focus groups, dealing with the specific issues considered relevant to the field of study, namely to elicit the views and feelings of members of social development projects.

Neuman (2000:420) points out that themes and concepts, rather than variables, serve as the analytical tools for qualitative studies. To that effect, the question guide covered the topics spelled out in the objectives of the study, namely to investigate women's experiences relating to their empowerment and their views on certain elements that had been identified as criteria for good practice in development programmes. Therefore, the questions dealt specifically with the respondents' perceptions and views based on their experiences of these criteria, which are the following:

Participation, which is considered an essential element for successful social development projects;

Training and development, particularly relevant elements of development projects, in view of the lack of education and learning opportunities for many women;

Women's groups and networks as an important element of many development projects for women. Tripp (1994:107- 133), Thomas-Slayter and

Sodikoff (2001:52) and Mosse (1993:162–164) have described their value, emphasising the benefits of cooperation in groups with similar interests;

Innovation, which is identified as a criterion for successful projects.

Formal permission was obtained from all the projects to hold the focus group sessions, offering them feedback on the results and an undertaking of confidentiality.

In the analysis and reporting of the findings, some information is displayed in matrix format, but otherwise it is mostly in the form of descriptions and quotations.

1.5 Design of report

The report on the study is divided into six chapters.

Chapter 2 deals with a background exploration of the different concepts and elements that form part of the discourse on social development and which the researcher considered as applicable to this study. These concepts are:

- Development
- Empowerment
- Poverty
- Capacity
- Mainstreaming
- Evaluation.

Chapter 3 focuses on South African policies for social development, the institutions and organisations tasked with the implementation thereof and, in particular, the role of social work and social workers in relation to social development.

Chapter 4 describes good practice experiences found in the literature on social development, illustrated with examples from around the world.

These good practice themes are identified as criteria for the success of social development programmes.

Chapter 5 provides information on the empirical study – the steps taken and method applied as well as a description of the findings.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the literature study and the results of the empirical research.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND, CONCEPTS, ELEMENTS AND DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

Transformation in South Africa is having far-reaching effects on the field of welfare services. Organisations delivering welfare services, who are also major employers of social workers, are in an inescapable position to change, as they are confronted by new and different demands that impact not only on their sustainability, but also on their morale and support base.

The worldwide move to the social development approach for addressing social ills has been accepted and incorporated as official South African government policy, as set out in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997).

In this chapter, an attempt is made to unpack the elements that are considered as important for policy and practice when contemplating social development as an approach. Therefore, an overview of the concepts and definitions, views and perspectives on different aspects that relate to social development will be presented.

Background information on some of the aspects of South African society, as demonstrated by demographic figures and surveys that indicate a state of underdevelopment, is given as a rationale for adopting a new approach.

In view of the popularity of empowerment as a concept, descriptions and exploration thereof are considered relevant, especially as it applies to women.

South African statistics are provided that highlight the realities and extent of poverty in the country and indicate the dire need for development, particularly as far as women are concerned.

A certain amount of knowledge, skills and capacity are required to implement development efforts. In that context, capacity building as an important requirement in social development warrants review in this study.

The mainstreaming concept provides a way to ensure women's inclusion in development projects. It has gained considerable popularity in development literature and programmes. The views and application of this principle are therefore highlighted.

For reasons of accountability, the impact of development programmes needs to be determined and ideas on evaluation therefore justify examination.

2.2 Development

What exactly is meant by social development and why is it of concern to social work? Development is a well-known concept found in many disciplines, such as health, management, economics and agriculture. The common theme implies change and growth taking place towards a better or improved position from the former. Inherent in the concept is the idea that it is a process and that it is dynamic, thus requiring a certain amount of energy and also deliberate interventions to drive it.

The **origin** of the social aspect of development can be found in the realisation that the way in which the 'rich' and developed northern countries assisted in the 'upliftment' of the 'poor South' in the 1950s and 1960s, by means of funding by institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations, did not bring about the development of the people it was intended for. The emphasis on the funding of infrastructure and facilities, such as hospitals, schools, airports and hotels, did not filter through to benefiting poor people in

the countries involved. It was realised that the human factor was not incorporated in the mostly economic development efforts and attempts at rectification which meant that people were mostly passive receivers of aid that was planned and implemented by outsiders. It was not perceived "that 'people' are in fact women and men, with different needs and interests" (Mosse, 1993:11). These 'modernisation' efforts by Northern institutions drew harsh criticism and since the 1970s awareness has emerged for local needs and local input in development, which would allow for the participation of recipients in the decision making of development strategies (Midgley, 1995:60). These views on the involvement of people in development have led to concepts such as 'community participation' and 'people's empowerment' and, eventually, to descriptions of what social development implies.

It has generally been accepted that the distinguishing aspect of social development is the fact that economic development must be an integral part of the process. Midgley (1995:23) calls it two sides of the same coin and states that there cannot be any reference to social development if economic development is not part of it, thereby hinting at the sustainability of social development programmes.

Midgley's **definition** of social development as "a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development" (Midgley, 1995:25) is further highlighted by several key aspects, one of which is the promotion of social welfare. Other aspects are a linkage to economics, the involvement of various other social sciences, which gives it an interdisciplinary focus, and the fact that it is a process, implying change taking place. The definition also conveys a positive and optimistic view of improvement or progress and that special efforts or interventions must take place by means of the implementation of plans and strategies with an end goal

in mind. These 'key aspects' provide clear guidelines for a structured approach in any helping initiative with developmental intentions.

Other authors have also alluded to the effect of social development on communities and the wider society. Rowlands (in Afshar, 1998) refers to experiences of women in the Third World and quotes Young (in Rowlands, 1998:15) as saying that social development is "a complex process, involving the social, economic, political and cultural betterment of individuals and of society itself".

Some of the reasoning that warrants a re-look at the way in which the helping professions, organisations and institutions have been functioning in South Africa for the past few decades is to be found in the statistics on human development. These present a skew and disparate situation of **underdevelopment** with regard to indicators of development, such as life expectancy, health conditions, housing, levels of literacy and education (Midgley, 1995:72).

A Country Report on South Africa by The World Bank, claims that the disparities existing in the country are among "the most extreme in the world" (2000:1), as about 13% of the population live in what is generally referred to as 'first world', implying developed, conditions, while 53% lives in underdeveloped circumstances, referred to as 'third world'.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been publishing the Human Development Report since 1990. This report serves as an indication of changes in human welfare and it has been accepted that mortality, education and economic activity are "undoubtedly three of the most important components of human development" (Murray, 1991:3).

In respect of South Africa, the Human Development Report of 2000 rated **life expectancy** at birth as 56 years for women and 50 for men. Projected death figures resulting from HIV/AIDS have been taken into account. By

comparison, in Canada, with the highest rating, life expectancy at birth was rated as 81,9 years for women and 76 for men.

Regarding **education**, StatsSA (2000/01:254) indicate that 12% of people over the age of 20 had no form of education in 1999, with 26% having some form of primary education and 51% some form of secondary education. It appears that, as a result of unequal access to education for those who grew up during the apartheid years, nearly a quarter (23%) of African women aged 25 years and older and 16% of African men had received no formal education (Budlender, 1998:2).

In respect of **housing** as an indicator of development, the most basic requirements, namely the availability of water and fuel, can affect people's quality of life considerably. In 1995, it was shown that over half (51%) of all South African households had no running water and had to fetch water from sources outside their homes, while 30% of households had to fetch wood for cooking and heating purposes. In 1993, two-thirds (66%) of those having to gather wood were adult women (Budlender, 1998: 2-5).

Accepting that development is a process, Paiva (1977:329) describes the goal and substance of social development as the "welfare of people" and refers to the value of self-determination, the supporting function of community institutions and the effects that human relations can have. Incidentally, all of these are common concepts in the fields of social work and social welfare.

Confronted with the realities of underdevelopment as described above, the reason for the concern of **social work and social workers** becomes evident.

The welfare approach is described by Moser (1989: 1807) as being widely used in social development policy and practices to deal with 'vulnerable groups' in society. This approach has concerned itself mainly with top-down handout practices that created dependency.

This approach also determines a family-centered view with women being dealt with in their role as mothers, thus on the receiving end of development processes. As it views motherhood as the most important role for women, this approach does not help women become independent, because they are not participating in development programmes and consequently are excluded from the opportunities to improve their circumstances through their own development (Moser, 1989: 1809).

The inappropriateness of this approach is emphasised by the challenges of the South African reality, which shows that nuclear families are almost a rarity.

The need for **women** to be involved in development processes is borne out by the extent to which they are heads of households, as almost half of all South African children under the age of seven live only with their mothers (Budlender, 1998: 43).

Bearing in mind that more women than men had no access to formal education, thereby considerably hampering their chances of formal employment, it becomes clear that involving women in bottom-up social development programmes would be a preferred way of helping them to help themselves.

Accepting the premise that social development requires a multidisciplinary approach, with empowerment as the outcome, it becomes clear that social workers and welfare organisations have an important function to assist in a “concerted effort” (Weyers, 2001:6) to unlock the potential of all sectors of society. By applying the principles of community work and by adapting the ‘empowering language of the strengths perspective’ (Gray and Collett van Rooyen, 2002:194) they will help to bring about changes for the betterment of people’s lives.

2.3 Empowerment

Empowerment has, by implication become part of the vocabulary on social development and can be considered a goal as well as a result of development efforts. It has been called a "word of the times...a buzz word for the 1990s" (Rowlands, 1998: 11).

2.3.1 *What is empowerment?*

Referring to the self-help concept, Adams (1996:5) defines empowerment as "the means by which individuals, groups and/or communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximise the quality of of their lives".

A definition of relevance for social work is that of Schurink (1998a: 407), who describes empowerment as an active process by which individuals or groups are energised to higher levels of capabilities to make decisions at solving their problems. Schurink reckons that "empowerment increases the energy, motivation, coping and problem-solving skills, decision-making power, self-esteem, self-sufficiency and self-determination of community members."

The way in which empowerment is described to benefit individuals, groups and communities makes it a powerful mechanism in development practices.

In an investigation of the empowerment processes and experience in 'real life', Rowlands (1998:18-19) describes spending time in a community of poor rural women, who started small group sessions to discuss their lives and problems and take on small projects. Decisions were taken on a consensus basis consequent to their discussions. In time the smaller groups developed into zonal groups and a council holding workshops to discuss and plan wider issues. Rowlands (1998) illustrates how both groups and individuals benefit from participating in empowering practices, as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 : Empowerment experienced on personal and collective levels.

Personal empowerment	Collective empowerment
Self-confidence	Group identity
Self-esteem	Collective sense of agency
Sense of agency	Group dignity
Sense of 'self' in a wider context	Self-organisation and management
Dignity	

Source: Rowlands (1998:23)

On the basis of this project, Rowlands (1998:18-24) comes to the conclusion that empowerment can be both personal and collective. On a personal level, the women, by becoming able to identify their needs and to learn about themselves, described themselves as being more confident, able to participate actively in group discussions and being able to interact with strangers and people in authority.

Tangible proof of how these experiences changed their lives as a result of becoming empowered to take decisions and act upon them, was the women's successful negotiations to take on the running of a grain warehouse with government approval and international funding. This was something they never would have dreamt of doing before.

Collective empowerment was identified by the ways in which the groups changed in their organisation, the activities they undertook and their interrelationships and interactions with the wider community and with the authorities.

The concept of dignity was found to be at the centre of the empowerment process for both individuals and groups. This was illustrated by the way in which they referred to feelings of respect and honour and that they deserved respect for who they are and what they do (Rowlands, 1998: 24). Significantly,

and as a consequence, dignity was considered a core element of empowerment.

A sense of agency is what gives individuals “the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life” (Bergdall, 2000:24). This ability to formulate decisions and act upon them can also be accomplished by groups of people working together for common goals.

The core of personal empowerment is evident in close relationships identified by Rowlands (1998:24) and illustrated in figure 2.2.

Empowerment in close relationships	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to negotiate ▪ Ability to communicate ▪ Ability to get support ▪ Ability to defend self/rights ▪ Sense of ‘self’ in relationships ▪ Dignity

Fig. 2.1: Empowerment in close relationships.

Source: Rowlands (1998:24)

It was found that personal relationships are the area women found the most difficult to change, as it applied to their relationships with husbands, boyfriends, fathers, mothers and mothers-in-law. They felt that this is an area where they are “up against it on *(their)* own” (Rowlands, 1998:23). Their perception of themselves as being capable and able to hold and express opinions, to be in control and to take decisions, changed, by them becoming able to recognise and understand the hindering or inhibiting factors in their situations. Developing this insight and developing a ‘sense of self’ helped them to become able to negotiate, communicate, get support and defend their rights, and thus to take decisions about their lives.

The changes experienced on a personal level as a result of feeling empowered are, by implication, unique for every person and dependent on personal circumstances and environments.

In a United Nations Institute for Social Development (UNISD) report, that took an in-depth look at aspects of empowerment displayed by women in different settings, Kabeer (1999) describes the changes taking place in their lives as a result of education and improved income.

Having choices is a central element, but empowerment is "essentially about change" (Kabeer, 1999:48) and the concept of empowerment is extremely difficult to measure due to the elusiveness of its meaning as well as the role of different values in different communities. A significant finding (Kabeer, 1999:36) was that economic activity was far more indicative of positive outcomes for both welfare and empowerment than education, and that access to work and finance for an own income was particularly meaningful. This not only provides material benefits, but also new experiences and social relationships.

In its *Progress of the World's Women* report, The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, 2000:20) defines personal empowerment as "acquiring knowledge and understanding...developing a sense of self-worth...and ...gaining the ability to generate choices".

2.3.2 *Ideas about power*

Expanding on the meaning and understanding of the empowerment of individuals and groups, Johnson and Mayoux (1998:148) describe empowerment as a "contested concept used in different ways by individuals and organisations of different worldviews and political persuasions". The authors refer to the different dimensions of power, which, apart from the material dimensions, such as having a variety of choices and access to resources, also has "more subtle manifestations in ideologies, values and

discourses". Aspects such as gender, age and ethnic discrimination present "complex mixes of material deprivation and ideological subordination" (Johnson and Mayoux, 1998:149).

The different types of power have led to the unpacking of the empowerment concept by different authors, who describe it in terms of 'power to', which implies having the ability to change the conditions of one's existence, 'power over', implying control over other people, and 'power with', which implies the ability to achieve control through joint action with others (Johnson and Mayoux 1998:149).

Rowlands (1998:14-15) describes empowerment as a process that is made up of different relationships and networks. Thus, becoming empowered does not only imply having 'power over' or 'power to', but also 'power from within' referring to tapping the spiritual strength and uniqueness of each individual as a human being. Developing this kind of empowerment seems to generate power. It does not reduce power in others, as it has self-respect as its basis. Personal empowerment is the result of empowerment processes that enhance the ability to act, to perceive yourself as capable, to comfortably interact with others and to be able to control resources. Accepting these concepts leads one to understand empowerment as an ongoing process, which is achieved through a variety of experiences.

From a social work point of view it is clear that the empowerment concept rests on the strength perspective, which is described by Saleebey (in Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi, 2000:93) as a "dramatic departure from conventional social work practice". Accepting this perspective, social workers and social agencies would recognise and use the inherent abilities, knowledge, experience and other basic resources that form part of the asset base of their clients and their environments in the helping process.

2.3.3 *Measuring empowerment*

During 2001, a project involving women in four Southern African countries, namely Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, investigated aspects of and methods for measuring empowerment [Kvinnoforum, 2001].

The project was based on the understanding that women's empowerment takes place on different levels and that their empowerment has effects on individual, group and society or community levels. Taking cognisance of the different types of power, the levels are seen as interconnected and empowerment experienced on one level has an effect on the others as well. Examples of empowerment on the different levels and the kinds of power involved are illustrated in table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Levels of empowerment

Empowerment level	Kind of power	Examples of empowerment
Individual level	Power within, power to	Increased: self esteem, ability to make decisions, control over life situation, gender awareness
Group level	Power with, power to	Increased: women organising, collective action to improve women's situation
Societal/community level	Power to	Change in rules and norms limiting what is possible for women to do, a political discourse allowing for gender equality

Source Kvinnoforum [2001:20]

Table 2.2 shows the effects of empowerment taking place at different levels. On individual levels, women become able to take control over their own lives, become able to set goals and to gain insight in their own abilities.

Empowerment at group level is illustrated by the way women develop a collective sense of agency to act collectively, undertake activities and organise themselves as groups. At societal or community level, empowerment results in changes affecting the lives of women in general, such as in political climates and cultural traditions.

The project was guided by specific principles considered as important to take into account when measuring women's empowerment [Kvinnoforum, 2001:23 - 24].

Some of these principles were to -

- determine a clear definition of empowerment at the beginning
- utilise empowering and participatory methods
- acknowledge women's own life experiences and personal sources of knowledge
- view women in their whole life situations by taking a holistic approach
- use both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

To develop indicators of empowerment, it was acknowledged that objective indicators of changes in behaviour and actions hardly exist and the project thus utilised the input of the women themselves, who provided examples of their own life experiences, while at the same time allowing for changes taking place in the process of becoming empowered. Predefined indicators were used in some of the cases.

The indicators used by the project in respect of individual, group and societal levels of empowerment are shown by a few examples in tables 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 respectively.

Table 2.3 illustrates a few examples of indicators of empowerment at individual level in respect of women in Zimbabwe.

Table 2.3: Examples of indicators at individual level - Zimbabwe

Element of empowerment	Indicator
Self-esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - caring about personal appearance and hygiene - taking the time to eat before joining an interview with researchers - sitting on a chair in the presence of parents-in-law instead of doing what is culturally prescribed for women in their presence: sitting on the floor - increased confidence to raise one's voice. Quote: "I can even address the State President on any issue now".
Agency/Self-esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ability to pay for schooling for children and actually letting children go to school when partner is opposed to this - choosing where to take children to school - making property purchases (with or without support of partner)

Source Kvinnoforum [2001:27]

Table 2.4 illustrates a few examples of indicators of empowerment at group level in respect of women in Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Table 2.4: Examples of indicators at group level – Namibia and Zimbabwe

Element of empowerment	Indicator
Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased cooperation with other women entrepreneur networks (Namibia) - start of cooperation with secondary school authorities to improve the school's resource base (Zimbabwe) - starting of different economic projects as a group to improve the financial situation of the group. For example, renovating an old chieftainship compound and opening it as a tourist attraction (Zimbabwe)

Source Kvinnoforum [2001:28]

The description of changes experienced by the women in a group context, illustrated in Table 2.4, correlates with the views of Tropp (1977:1321-1328) on utilising the developmental approach in social group work. It is maintained that social workers, instead of being problem oriented, should help people to build strengths, realise their potential for self-awareness, value others and achieve group action towards common goals by adopting this model (Tropp, 1977:1322).

Table 2.5 illustrates a few examples of indicators of empowerment at group and societal level in respect of women in Botswana.

Table 2.5: Examples of indicators at group and societal level – Botswana

Element of empowerment	Indicator and discussion
Agency/gender awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The establishment of the Caucus for Women parliamentarians and Councillors.</i> Women in politics have taken collective action to work together over party boundaries to achieve a common goal. The establishment of the Caucus can also be seen as a questioning of the abiding to the political (patriarchal) order, as working together with people from different political parties was unheard of in Botswanan politics. Many of the women were hesitant about whether they could really do this to begin with. Group empowerment for the women involved, and also an indicator of empowerment at societal level. • <i>The creation of a Women's Manifesto that outlines concerns and demands of women in Botswana.</i> This can be seen as an indicator of empowerment in that women see the need and right to formulate the common concerns and demands of women to improve their situation. It is an example of both agency and gender awareness among the women who actually made the Manifesto come true. It is also an indicator at societal level, and an enabling factor of the empowerment of women. • <i>Increased numbers of women in decision-making structures</i> is an indicator of empowerment at a societal level. After the 1999 election, women parliamentarians increased from 9% to 18%. At local government level, the number of woman councillors increased from 15% to 19%. • <i>Increasing level of awareness of the public on the role of women in politics,</i> according to the interviewed respondents' views of the situation of women in politics. They noted that there seemed to be a higher level of gender awareness as compared to five years ago. This increase in awareness can be seen as an indicator of women's empowerment at a societal level.

Source Kvinnoforum [2001:28]

The empowerment experienced by the women at societal level, as shown in Table 2.5, is a clear illustration of what could be achieved by organisations and social workers, should they utilise the social action model in community work practices, described by Weyers (2001:220 – 235).

Some of the lessons learned from this project about the measurement of empowerment and the methods used were that

- “The method used to measure empowerment should be empowering i.e. assist women in reflecting on their situation and where they want to be.
- It must be acknowledged that empowerment is a process of many intersecting components – economic empowerment is likely to have positive effects on other aspects of women’s lives.
- The method must take into account that different groups of women are differently located within structures of class, colour, ethnicity, geographical location etc. and therefore have different needs and wants” [Kvinnoforum, 2001:28].

Mosse, in *Half the World, Half a Change* (1993:161), describes empowerment as the only term that defines development for women taking all aspects of their lives into account, such as the reproductive, private and public, as well as family and household maintenance work. She maintains that empowerment is associated with a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach to development. In terms of this concept of empowerment, women strive for developing self-reliance and internal strength, which help them to form alliances and organisations in line with the collective concept of empowerment referred to by Rowlands (1998:23).

2.4 Poverty

Statistics South Africa has documented poverty in a special publication, *Measuring Poverty in South Africa* (StatsSA, 2000). In describing its poverty measurements, Paccoud (in StatsSA, 2000:54) is quoted, as saying that aspects

such as access to clean water and sanitation, education and employment should be considered elements of household expenditure. In this context, it appears that almost half of the country's population can be considered as poor, taking into account that 42% of households live on less than R1 000 per month, while 17% of households live on R600 or less (2000:60). The publication further shows that female-headed households tend to spend even less than those headed by males, with 20% of female-headed households spending R600 or less per month.

The publication, based on the Census 1996 and the October Household Survey 1995, found that the Eastern Cape had the highest proportion of households in the lowest income category, making it the province with the largest number of poor people. It is further shown that 32% of Eastern Cape households have an income of R200 or less per month. Households headed by women are found to be in the poorest category, while African female-headed households are the lowest expenditure category (StatsSA, 2000:62).

However, it is inconceivable to think of poverty only in terms of money or income and expenditure measurements. But these measurements are used most often because they provide some common understanding both nationally and internationally.

Poverty has been defined in many ways as a result of the realisation that concepts and perceptions differ greatly and of the understanding that it defies generalisations.

Measuring Poverty in South Africa (StatsSA, 2000:54) defines poverty as "a denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect from others".

A Discussion Paper on gender in the World Bank's Poverty Assessments points out that "poverty is difficult to define" because of the multi-dimensional

aspects thereof (Whitehead and Lockwood, 1999a:23). This belief led to the understanding that there is "no standard, agreed way of defining and measuring poverty" (1999a:24). It is accepted, though, that factors such as lack of access to fresh water, sanitation, electricity and health services can all form part of being poor.

Unfortunately, a greater awareness of poverty and measures to identify its causes and reasons, do not necessarily lead to a greater awareness and understanding of the ways in which women are affected by poverty and the impact of being poor on their lives. This seems to require special efforts at creating gender awareness to identify the ways in which they suffer and the creation of methods and structures to assist in alleviating the effects of poverty on their lives and the lives of their families.

There is a need for the political will to institute policies and special efforts for the development of gender awareness in service delivery organisations and institutions. As part of strategies and efforts to alleviate poverty by means of the provision of services and access, deliberate policies and procedures need to be built in to ensure that women benefit from such efforts.

According to Sen (1997: 6), women are up against power structures, not only in their homes, but also "in communities, markets and local governments. Empowering women as part of a process of engendering anti-poverty strategies means strengthening their capacity to address and confront these loci of power." Sen further refers to access to information being crucial as part of enabling women to exercise any power. Such information can, for example, relate to work programmes in local communities and can help them to take meaningful decisions about participation in such programmes.

Easy access to information can also help to ensure that "development funds for particular projects are actually spent on these projects" and that governments have to make information available to their citizens if

programme efficiency is to improve and corruption is to be eliminated. The availability of appropriate and relevant information and having the know-how to access and utilise it is probably among the most enabling aspects of empowerment for women.

2.5 Capacity

'Lack of capacity' has become an often-used term in the delivery of development services and the implementation of policies in South Africa. Capacity is an illusive concept, referring to a general notion of 'know-how', ability, skill and expertise, which implies having the knowledge to carry out certain decisions and functions.

The specially commissioned *Synthesis Report* on Development Cooperation for South Africa (Soni, 2000:106) dealt with capacity as a special issue, describing lack of capacity as "one of the most critical areas of concern of both government and donors". The opportunity to gain knowledge from experience and to learn about resources, which can be considered important elements of capacity for development, was found to be lacking in government at provincial and local levels, where the implementation of policies is expected to take place, as well as in civil society. The report further highlights specific aspects of the problem in the 'donor community' by stating that, although there apparently is a commitment by donors to assist in capacity-building efforts, this has not transpired and spells out the following findings:

"There is:

- A lack of coordination of capacity-building strategies by donors
- A lack of criteria and standards by which donors support and assess capacity-building programmes
- Inappropriate and loosely defined initiatives

- A lack of learning from isolated cases of good practice" (Soni, 2000:106).

Government's efforts at capacity building are described by the report as "piecemeal, uncoordinated, short term and too often associated with training". It recommends a "more holistic and integrated approach to capacity building in SA" (Soni, 2000: 107).

Questions arise as to whether the lack of capacity phenomenon to institute development programmes forms part of the general state of deprivation and underdevelopment found in a large part of the population, whether the cause is a lack of development and empowerment know-how, or whether existing sources of knowledge and skills are not utilised.

The development of capacity is described by the UNDP (United Nations Development Program, 1997:1) as "the process by which individuals, organisations, institutions and societies develop their abilities individually and collectively to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives".

It appears that the implementation of social development programmes constitutes a huge challenge to the individuals, organisations, institutions and societies that are expected to deliver social, human and welfare services.

The challenge implies changes in behaviour, procedures and practices to meet the requirements to perform social development functions successfully.

Different authors have alluded to what these requirements are. Chambers (1998:XV) has extensively documented the concept of learning from participation in development and maintains that "sustained participation in development demands transformation in three domains: methods and procedures; institutional cultures; and personal behaviour and attitudes". He believes that changing personal behaviour and attitudes are most important, because people in authority nearly always have to unlearn dominating

behaviour, which inhibits participation, in order to be able to interact in non-dominating, empowering ways.

Rowlands (1998:25-29) refers to 'change agents' or 'catalysts' as experts from related fields with skills and knowledge, but above all with the personal attributes of positive attitudes of respect, humility and willingness to learn and who are committed to development as a process.

A well-developed sense of self-awareness and insight into personal preferences and biases are further attributes.

Institutions and organisations wishing to become involved in grassroots projects with empowerment and development goals have to resist imposing their own views and agendas. Rather, the concept of alliance building is recommended for sharing goals and responsibilities. It is further stated that networking skills can be brought in by promoting the concept of alliances or partnerships. Networks with other institutions and organisations can be particularly valuable to the process by enhancing it with access to facilities, resources, knowledge or infrastructure that otherwise would not have been tapped.

Midgley (1997:190-192) advocates that organisations be created to take responsibility for social development at regional and local levels. Such social agencies have to work closely with national economic development agencies to integrate the social and economic goals of development, while allowing for and respecting different styles and approaches. The ultimate goal should be that "economic development directly improves people's welfare".

Bergdall (2000) describes the collective empowerment of communities in a research study that involved all the stakeholders, viz. government officials and community groupings, working with deprived Ethiopian communities in a development programme. Processes to deliberately ensure their active participation achieved learning by all.

By utilising a bottom-up development approach, making use of series of workshops, the rural communities were assisted to plan development initiatives and implement their plans through their own endeavours and resources. The workshops served as "active learning laboratories where the various stakeholders, including the Ethiopian government officers working at different levels, could expand their ideas about popular participation in development" (Bergdall, 2000:200). In this way, all participants had the opportunity to learn, build capacity and acquire knowledge by means of experiencing and participating in empowering processes aimed at social development.

Bergdall (2000:26 -28) believes that changing behaviour and attitude is important for individuals and organisations that want to be involved in development projects that rely on the participation of those targeted by the programmes. This belief is driven by the notion that behaviour is governed by images, because people act according to their image of themselves and how people react to them. This self-perception determines attitudes, beliefs and opinions. By employing bottom-up approaches in the workshops and using 'stories of change', positive changes were recognised openly and people were increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for development activities at ground level. Officials involved in the workshops at different levels became more and more aware of the capabilities and potential of grassroots communities to decide and act upon their own perceptions of development needs (2000: 203).

Judging from these descriptions, it appears that, in order to address the lack of capacity that exists at both institutional and community levels, special and innovative ways of learning and a break from the conventional methods of telling and giving instructions are required.

2.6 Mainstreaming

Deliberate efforts are needed to find ways to make certain that the resources and abilities of women do not get lost in development planning, resulting in them being sidelined when programmes are implemented. As in other developing countries, this is an important issue in South Africa because of the backlogs in services and development opportunities. The call for integrating women in development processes has been heard internationally since the 1970s (Razavi & Miller, 1995:4).

‘Mainstreaming’ has become a popular and well-accepted way to describe the strategies adopted by governments, donor agencies and development organisations. This implies that the interests of women should be included in all stages of development policies, planning and programmes, including in procedures such as financial and other management activities. It is accepted that, to adopt such strategies, nothing less than an organisational transformation is required from an institution. It is called a “profound organisational transformation”, as “this includes both the core policy decisions...and the small everyday decisions of implementation”, according to the UNDP/GIDP Gender Mainstreaming Glossary [2001].

Proof abounds that such strategies have been hard to implement. Razavi and Miller (1995:64) presented a special paper on the efforts by the UNDP, the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation to integrate women’s issues in their mainstream activities at the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. It was shown that it remained a challenge to ensure that the commitments made actually leads to actions in development programmes implemented by these institutions.

Some of these ‘challenges’ may be found in the fact that among the prerequisites for implementing mainstreaming strategies are clear policy and

programme guidelines, extensive gender training and regular reviews of the progress made.

A key word is 'gender sensitivity', which the UNDP/GIDP Glossary describes as a "recognition of the differences and inequities between women's and men's needs, roles, responsibilities and identities" that needs to be developed by special, deliberate efforts and be driven from the top level of an organisation to have any effect at operational level [2001]. To this end, UNDP employees are provided with extensive guidelines by means of a *Suggestive Checklist of Actions for Gender Mainstreaming* which sets out the 'what' and 'how' as a procedural document for the organisation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat (1999:10), while undertaking to provide "expert advice and monitoring on the mainstreaming of gender in economic and social policy development and implementation" and acknowledging that it considers "gender mainstreaming an essential element of good governance", at the same time concedes that specific projects and activities aimed at women are also required.

The question arises whether an inference can be drawn that this is an acceptance of the reality that insisting on gender mainstreaming as the only method of ensuring women's participation in development programmes is not achievable without extensive additional input and efforts from institutions and that women-targeted programmes are therefore also needed.

These perceptions are very similar to the views expressed in the *Synthesis Report on Development Cooperation in South Africa*, (Soni, 2000:109), namely that both donors and government fail to implement policies on mainstreaming in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes

This view serves as proof of the depth of understanding and commitment that is required to be able to put such policies into practice. The report thus also

recommends that “gender-targeted activities should continue alongside gender mainstreaming”.

2.7 Evaluation

“Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is vital if governments and aid organisations are to judge whether development efforts have succeeded or failed” [Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, 2001]

There is general agreement about the necessity of evaluation as part of all development activities. Different opinions about the reasons and purpose for carrying out evaluation determine the differences between the methods used to reach the desired results.

For South Africans, who lately have been at the receiving end of international attention and funding to deal with poverty and deprivation, a healthy way of managing the transformation process would be to instill a culture of insistence on accountability for interventions. This view is echoed by the *Synthesis Report* on Development Cooperation in South Africa (Soni, 2000:12), which states that this is one way to ensure that such funding makes a significant contribution to the country's development.

The plethora of literature, research and services available on the subject of monitoring and evaluation methods relevant to social development are proof of a worldwide demand, not only for greater accountability, but also for information and knowledge on the subject. This is borne out by a special news service, Mande News [2001], which deals with developments in monitoring and evaluation methods related to development projects and programmes with social objectives. This Internet news service provides information on conferences, workshops, courses, seminars and publications such as books, newsletters, journals and evaluation networks. One of the most recent additions is the formation of the African Evaluation Association, which was

created with the overall objective of increasing the evaluation capacity in Africa [MandeNews: 2001].

The shifts taking place in developing countries and the way in which assistance aimed at poverty reduction and measures to reduce backlogs are viewed have also lead to changing views on evaluation and feedback.

The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation of programmes generally has been accepted as giving feedback to donors, providing input for planning and strategies and assisting with learning. It is a dynamic field and Barnard and Cameron (2000) have identified the following emerging trends that have influenced evaluation feedback in recent times:

- "The changing way development aid is delivered
- Domestic pressure for greater accountability
- The move towards participatory monitoring and evaluation
and areas needing improvement are to
- institutionalise the learning aspect and to share evaluation results with stakeholders" (Barnard and Cameron, 2000:5).

Since evaluation is a broad term, covering a variety of activities, a World Bank study by Baker explains the different concepts usually involved, namely monitoring, process evaluation, cost-benefit evaluation and impact evaluation, which are different though complimentary According to the author, (Baker, 2000:1) "Monitoring will help to assess whether a program is being implemented as planned; process evaluation is concerned with how the program operates and focuses on service delivery; cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness. Evaluation assesses program costs (monetary or non-monetary), impact evaluation is intended to determine more broadly whether the program had the desired effects...and whether those effects are attributable to the program interventions."

Taking the cost, capacity and other resource requirements for doing evaluations into consideration, it can be accepted that not all development programmes justify the effort. In view of this 'daunting task', Prennushi, Rubio and Subbaroa (2000:12) provide a few guidelines to determine when poverty alleviation programmes deserve to be evaluated, namely,

- When programmes are considered to be of strategic relevance to a region or country
- When knowledge can be gained about poverty reduction (what 'works' and what doesn't 'work')
- When a programme or policy uses an innovative approach
- When programmes are aimed at communities or groups that are difficult to reach geographically, or at special groups, such as women.

Baker (2000:17) agrees that impact evaluations should be done in the case of costly projects that are innovative, can be replicated and have well-defined strategies.

Another aspect for consideration is what is called the 'counterfactual', namely what would the situation have been had the intervention not taken place. This is referred to as "a fundamental question" by Prennushi *et al.* (2000:13). In programmes aimed at poverty relief, in which people's lives are affected, this consideration becomes particularly relevant from a humane point of view. Withholding aid for research purposes would not be tolerated. Withholding a programme from a group for control or comparison purposes is often not realistic and can be viewed as unethical. The solution is thought to be to compare the circumstances and situation of the same group before and after their involvement in a social programme, which can be helpful in this regard.

The measurement of development programmes in monetary terms, whereby the economic efficiency of costs vs. benefits is weighed up utilising data such as household income in respect of poverty alleviation projects has been criticised in various quarters (Baker 2000:13, Whitehead & Lockwood 1999:5, Hanmer *et al.* 1997).

The learning aspect is often lost when looking for successful outcomes and this aspect deserves more attention. This becomes clear when poverty is treated not only as a state but also as a process, which recognises that there are different causes and contributing elements that need to be taken into consideration.

This is also the view of Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001:46), who argue that not only social and environmental factors, but also achievements and failures should be assessed, with the stakeholders themselves being involved.

This perspective is echoed by Perrin (2000:6), who promotes the idea of learning from what has *not* worked as a possible source for innovation in programmes. He further warns against the indiscriminate and inappropriate use of mean scores and aggregation, as these can "mislead and disguise what is truly happening" (2000:8).

Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001:55-56) show that women's involvement and greater influence over decisions on resource management in donor-driven projects in Africa have improved livelihood security as well as sustainable environments. They do this by means of a special study which utilises a methodology that evaluates project processes and takes into account the effects of social, economic and ecological factors. In presenting specific case studies, they identify common themes that they call "enabling conditions". These are: -

Data that shows women's contribution to labour and to decision making by receiving higher unit prices for products, thereby proving their capabilities;

Training, which proved central to success, also integrating gender awareness in agricultural services and delivery systems;

Organisation, whereby community members become change agents by taking initiative and accepting leadership roles, and by building capacity and collective strength by taking a more active part in political processes that affect their lives;

Partnerships, which proved the advantages of building alliances and coalitions to obtain knowledge and skills from diverse groups, leading to a broadening of vision and experiences, which in turn lead to more flexible and innovative actions.

They also identify indicators to show progress based on qualitative findings, namely:

Impact indicators, including qualitative and quantitative dimensions covering productivity, welfare, equity and environmental aspects;

Process indicators, comprising capacity building, organisational skills, leadership and partnerships;

Sustainable indicators, which include replicability, local ownership, cost-effectiveness, and environmental sustainability, which are essential elements of the long-term prospects of such programmes.

These methods are thought to go some way to fill the gap in the low level of evaluating the role of women in poverty alleviation and development assessments.

Whitehead and Lockwood (1999:550), in an article reviewing African poverty assessments done by the World Bank, observe that the popular use of participatory evaluation methods has the most potential to include the roles of

women. However, their review "confirms the point made by a number of critical, but sympathetic observers that PPA's [Participatory Poverty Assessments] are not intrinsically gender sensitive and that considerable effort needs to be made to ensure they are so".

2.8 Conclusion

Social development, with the understanding that economic development is inherently part thereof, is viewed as the preferred method to drive the transformation process in respect of the helping professions in South Africa.

In the light of the daunting state of underdevelopment affecting a large part of the population, which by implication forms a significant portion of most social work caseloads, the concept of empowerment of both individuals and groups would mean that people become less dependent and more self-sufficient. The changes brought about by involvement in empowerment processes have proved not only beneficial to individuals, but also to communities. The way women are affected by poverty and a lack of opportunities makes them a special target for empowerment and development policies and processes.

The competencies required for successful development programmes are best acquired in learning processes that involve all by utilising bottom-up instead of top-down learning practices. Following this, the fact that many long-held beliefs and attitudes will have to change, allowing for new roles, such as partnerships and change agents, make this a challenging undertaking for many authorities and institutions. The roles of institutions, authorities and organisations, as providers of services and resources, need to be reviewed in the light of social development considerations.

CHAPTER 3

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICIES AND STRUCTURES FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides measures to address development in South Africa by means of government policy and guidelines which will be highlighted as dimensions of the 'how' to address social development. Local governments have been identified specifically as special vehicles for the delivery of services to support social development efforts. The way in which this responsibility is carried out will be explored.

The role of welfare organisations and social workers as existing resources and providers of social welfare services will be reflected on, and the effects of new social development policies on their functioning will be contemplated.

3.2 Government policy

Governments fulfil their social welfare function by promulgating and implementing public policies and programmes, referred to as social policies.

Social work and social workers have traditionally been closely aligned with the social policies of the government of the day and are often the main executioners of such policies, mainly in relation to social services.

Many of these policies changed with the adoption of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). The South African government accepted a radical break from previous welfare policies by defining the new vision as "a welfare system which facilitates the development of human capacity and self- reliance within

a caring and enabling socio-economic environment" (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997: 6).

The new policies support the social development approach, of which the main feature is the emphasis on integrating economic and social policy. According to Midgley and Sherraden (in Midgley, Tracy and Livermore, 2000: 435–437) the main characteristics of a social development policy are that the state not only encourages economic independence for social welfare clients, but also ensures that provision is made for resources to ensure access to “knowledge, skills, opportunities, incentives and subsidies”.

By these means, previous recipients of welfare aid stand a better chance to become economically productive.

A special section of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:49) is devoted to women and their needs, as well as to development approaches to address these needs by being gender sensitive and ensuring that their dignity, self-esteem and well-being are promoted.

Subsequent endorsement for the policy of transforming the welfare field is found in the same department’s 1999 Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999:12-15), which sets out the framework for policy and welfare service delivery. An emphasis on empowerment underscores the goal of an outcome orientation for welfare services, namely having to prove that results are achieved in terms of a clear purpose and strategy.

In an attempt to involve the private welfare sector in the new dispensation, the Department of Social Development held a consultative workshop with stakeholders in October 1999 to outline welfare priorities, thereby acknowledging the social crisis existing in the country and the state of underdevelopment.

At a follow-up consultative workshop held in March 2001, the minister (Ministry of Social Development, 2001:3) reiterated the government's commitment to address poverty and underdevelopment by means of development approaches that harness the participation of communities and to indicate "the shift of focus of the ministry's work from welfare to development". Recognising a lack of skills and capacity, special strategies for re-orientation and retraining were indicated for caregivers and officials with a view to employing a 'new category' of workers (Ministry of Social Development, 2001:6).

A further step in the transformation process was the announcement in parliament on 6 March 2001 of the creation of a statutory advisory Board on Social Development by the Ministry of Social Development (2001: 1). The objectives of the Board were spelled out as "creating partnerships between civil society and government to act as a consultative forum on social policy and...to address social development needs and act as a consultative forum on social policy" (Ministry of Social Development, 2001:2-3). Some of the functions of the Board include the promotion of social development initiatives, advising on local and international good practices in social development services and effective review and evaluation procedures for social development policies and programmes.

By means of these different measures, the Department of Social Development, representing the government's views and intentions, has stated a clear path for organisations and practitioners in the welfare sector. In this way, the first requirement for social development, described by Paiva (1977:329) as political will, has been met. The second requirement is ideology, which implies leadership and partnerships for sharing the desire to make a difference and bring about development. The third requirement, according to Paiva, is cooperation of the role players, which points to the interdependency of different care structures.

3.3 The role of local government

In the hierarchy of South African government structures, the Constitution prescribes a clear, unambivalent developmental function for local government, namely "to promote social and economic development" (1996:81).

This has led to municipalities becoming an important part in the delivery of services and playing a key role in the transformation of the systems and structures responsible for implementing government policies.

A vast responsibility therefore rests on councillors and officials, who are faced with the challenges of limited knowledge and capacity as "local government in South Africa is undergoing a process of fundamental restructuring and transformation...(and)...if it is going to carry out its constitutional mandate and fulfil its developmental role, (it) has to ensure that it has a skilled and motivated workforce committed to improve the quality of life of the local citizenry" (Reddy, 2000:293).

Special vehicles such as the IDP (Integrated Development Plan) set out the strategies for local councils to achieve developmental objectives, allowing for an integrated approach to gender equity and poverty reduction in the allocation of contracts and sub-contracts, as measures for job creation.

Other mechanisms to assist municipalities in their efforts to promote economic development and alleviate poverty are the LED (Local Economic Development) programme and the Social Plan Funds, which have the aim of promoting the partnership concept, allowing for small and private entrepreneurs to become part of the suppliers of services to councils. Implicit in the allocation of such outsider/partnership contracts is the understanding that gender and poverty are two essential criteria in the allocation of all contracts.

In a study to determine the way a large urban municipality implemented its IDP obligation of ensuring women's participation, Naidoo (1999:85-90) found that both politicians and officials lack commitment. She established that, although the documentation on the IDP was thorough, it was 'gender blind' and did not include any reference to targeting women. The method of holding consultative community meetings, which could have been 'models of change', disappointed as they conveyed a sense of being patronising to poorer communities and lacked the participation of women due to insensitive planning of venues, bad timing and poor communication. The lack of councillor interest and involvement led to the meetings being run along bureaucratic, highly technical agendas, thus discouraging any grassroots participation by community members.

The challenge to change attitudes, assumptions and behaviour is aptly illustrated by the conclusion that the traditional schooling of planners does not equip them to challenge perceptions about women and to consciously ensure their participation, which would form "the basis of developmental local government" (Naidoo, 1999: 107).

A specially funded study by Cole and Parnell (2000:18), to assess the way in which IDPs are implemented and function, found a serious gap between the requirements of the IDPs and the capacity available in the municipalities.

The same authors also came to the conclusion that "there are sadly very few local authorities that have fully grasped the new integrated approach to planning that the IDP represents ...and that...best practice is in its infancy". Another comment referring to the attention given to women and poverty is equally disheartening, namely that "if it is hard to specify examples of 'best practice', then finding examples of good gender and poverty sensitive IDPs is even more difficult" and ... "no municipality has managed to integrate either gender or poverty into all the facets of the IDP" (Cole & Parnell, 2000:45).

Positive signs, however, are their referral to some 'interesting' examples of innovative practices found at some municipalities, such as activities aimed at developing an understanding of gender concepts, establishing gender sensitive municipal strategies and including women on IDP teams (Cole & Parnell, 2000:46).

The implementation of policy depends on both government and private sector structures and practitioners that are capable, willing and enthusiastic about social development.

3.4 Welfare organisations and social work

As providers of social services over a wide spectrum of fields, welfare organisations and the profession of social work have a long tradition as important resources and have been considered a mainstay of support in times of need.

It is therefore opportune to compare present-day social development concepts with traditional social work perspectives and practices and to look for possible linkages and integration.

Midgley (1995:33) discusses the way social work perspectives have contributed to the definition of social development and its future value of adding a professional dimension to development interventions by means of the practical way in which it focuses its efforts. However, he reckons that it would be "necessary that social work transcend the idealized and hortatory approach which has been used so extensively in the past".

Paiva (1977:333) recognises the contribution of social work, referring to the philosophy of the profession to focus on the whole person, group or community, though "unfortunately restricting itself to narrowly defined boundaries". This tendency seems to have been avoided in developing countries, where interdisciplinary cooperation is more common.

3.4.1 *A changed environment*

A number of South African authors have reflected on the implications of the changed South African environment for the social work profession and the organisations traditionally rendering welfare services. Some of these authors, such as Rankin (1997:189), McKendrick (1990:12) and Von Delft (1988), contemplating the role of social work in a changing society, have referred to its curative role focusing on the individual, which has been the trademark of the profession and can be considered as a hindrance for the profession and its practitioners in adapting to the new order in the country. The new order is demanding a wider approach and involvement on different levels, focusing more on communities and a role as 'change agent'.

In describing "future capabilities" that will be expected of social workers and that will require attention in their training, Brink (1993:62) mentions, amongst others, evaluation, planning and organising, managing, formulating goals, creativity and research. All these capabilities could be considered relevant in relation to social development and therefore meaningful roles for social workers wanting to become involved in social development activities.

Other views that express serious concerns and even anxiety are the following:

- "Future possibilities regarding roles and competencies...may be perceived as limitless and overwhelming" (Van Zyl, 1989:275),
- "If social work is to have a meaningful future in South Africa, it must become increasingly relevant to the needs and wants of the South African people" (McKendrick, 1990: 18), and
- "Most social welfare services are therapeutic, attempting to change people who have a problem, even if the causes of the problem lie elsewhere...Social work, as it is now practiced, may be of limited usefulness in a country irrevocably launched in the direction of change

towards social justice. Indeed, in some respects the present nature of social work may even be counterproductive to the new society..." (McKendrick, 1990:242),

- "Misconceptions and misunderstanding create many uncertainties and even resistance and fear among social welfare workers" (Lombard, 1996:162),
- "There is some degree of scepticism regarding the possibility of multisectoral collaboration" (Gray, 1997a:369) and "For social workers to implement the social development approach, a change in focus is required" (Gray, 1997b:221),
- "Considering how deeply imbedded the perception of the curative role of social work is in the minds of many social workers, a radical paradigm shift is needed to make social workers more receptive to the idea of development" (Rankin, 1997:189).

If these views and remarks present a sceptical outlook and lack of optimism and confidence, it is no wonder that, in its submission to the National Consultative Conference held in October 1999, the Joint University Committee for Schools of Social Work reported "ambivalent commitment on the part of the field work supervisors toward the development paradigm"... and..."Demotivation, lack of commitment and depression within the social work profession" as problems being experienced (Department of Social Development, 1999:41).

Further concerns are expressed by The Joint Universities Committee for Social Work (Booyens & Tshiwula, 2001:xviii - xix) when it refers to the "poor image and low morale" of social workers, the fact that social development as a concept is not shared, accepted and implemented by all in the field, and an apparent lack of support and recognition for the profession by the Department of Social Development.

These perceptions present the risk that they could tarnish the image of the social work profession indelibly, with long-term effects for present and future practitioners. Questions arise whether such perceptions are fair and what the causes are.

Considering the realities and social needs of South Africa as a developing country, social work as one of the main helping professions could be expected to play a meaningful role. In the same vein, social workers, given their theoretical grounding and competencies in social work methods to help not only individuals, but also communities, should be able to live up to the expectations and challenges they are faced with in the new dispensation.

3.4.2 Suitable equipment

Addressing this apparent dilemma, Hammond (in Brink, 1993:25) questions the suitability of social work training based on models of developed countries for application in developing countries. It is indicated that a worldwide need exists for indigenous training that is fitting for local economic and socio-political situations. Brink (1993:28) further refers to the ways in which theory and practice should be integrated by means of a close relationship between educators and practitioners of social work and expresses reservations about the appropriateness of training for practice in terms of essential skills requirements.

Significantly, in view of the present day requirements, Brink (1993:62) also found social workers lacking in what is referred to as "future skills", such as

- programme formulation,
- programme evaluation,
- resource development,
- policy implementation

- and policy change.

Other skills that should be covered in training, as they are required in practice, are

- "evaluation of goal achievement,
- handling conflict,
- planning and organising as management tools,
- evaluating own inputs,
- creativity and research".

The same study (Brink, 1993:62) found that community work was required by only a few work situations, but that it should be noted that the study covered mainly 'white organisations', where community work does not seem to be a priority. The conclusions were that social work training in "future skills" is needed and that community work skills and knowledge should be acknowledged and applied. It is recommended that organisations should be educated on the suitability of community work and the implementation thereof as a relevant social work method to address social problems (1993:75).

Considering these findings and recommendations, it would seem realistic to say that what Brink referred to as "future skills" in 1993, became 'present day' skill requirements within a relatively short period of time. The Department of Social Development indicated in 1999 that, to implement its programme of action, "new skills, experience, and creative strategies in social development and management are to be brought in" (1999:4).

In 1988, at an International Congress of Schools of Social Work, Van Zyl (1989:275) presented a paper on the future roles that social workers would be expected to perform, which had been identified by a special task force. The following eleven **critical** future roles were identified:

- Programme manager
- Programme implementer
- Manager (planner/strategist, organiser, initiator/motivator, exercising control)
- Negotiator/mediator
- Public relations officer/marketer
- Innovator
- Researcher/evaluator
- Opinion former
- Consultant
- Policy manager
- Counsellor/therapist.

Following on these findings, Van Zyl proclaimed that “the future of social work in Southern Africa depended on a concerted effort” to ensure the continued relevancy of the profession.

Today, 16 years later, the roles identified by Van Zyl’s task force would be most appropriate equipment for social workers undertaking social development responsibilities.

3.4.3 The vehicles

Questions have arisen as to why social workers, utilising their problem-solving skills and applying community work methods in community development to address needs and problems (as described by Lombard, Weyers and Schoeman 1991:252 - 253), are not recognised and involved to address the problems and challenges of underdevelopment in the country.

An important hurdle to utilising and pooling these available skills and knowledge resources might be that their efforts are frustrated by the way in which organisations, as main employers, function in isolation, preventing an effective coordinated approach to address social problems in communities (Lombard *et al.* 1991:108).

Welfare organisations, whose existence and goals should be service to communities, seem not to have transformed their functioning in line with proven social development needs. Dunham (in Lombard *et al.* 1991:110 -111) points out that welfare organisations spend time on fact-finding and fundraising, without getting a grip on planning, social change and social policy and that social planning, which involves the participation of different disciplines and coordinating resources, seems to be lacking because of an 'ivory tower syndrome'.

The lack of transformation of organisations came under the spotlight in a speech in parliament by the minister of Social Development, who stated that "private voluntary welfare...still operate(s) within an apartheid paradigm and generally do(es) not serve the majority in need...Certain welfare organisations have made little attempt to ensure that their boards are representative in terms of race, gender, disability and the populations that they serve" (Department of Social Development 2001:8).

The welfare sector has been resisting change and is perceived as having a conservative attitude that contrasts with liberalism, according to Zastrow (in Lombard, 1996:172), who comes to the conclusion that "the welfare sector should become liberal".

3.4.4 *A new path*

"Helping people to help themselves", a credo of social work according to McKendrick (2001: 109), provides the starting block for this profession to be an important role player in social development.

Midgley (1996) explains various ways in which social workers in different parts of the world have proved themselves as invaluable contributors to help bring about changes in people's lives by helping them to overcome poverty and deprivation to become self-sustainable.

The following are some examples (Midgley, 1996:20 – 23) of instances where social work practitioners have fulfilled important developmental functions by adopting community work models.

- The involvement of social workers in community-based programmes aimed at 'human capital' development helped communities to mobilise their resources and establish health and education facilities at different levels.
- An aspect of social development referred to as 'social capital' meant that social workers utilising networking and organising skills assisted in establishing community facilities and infrastructure by involving different other role players.
- Social workers have been actively involved in promoting micro-enterprise developments in countries where traditional social assistance programmes have been abolished. Such enterprises do not only lead to economic development, but also help to restore self-respect for their clients.
- By adopting a developmental perspective, social workers have assisted their clients to become self-employed in many ways, which have often evolved into cooperatives, which "are particularly well-suited to special needs clients such as the mentally ill or physically disabled".

Such endeavours undoubtedly lead to clients' empowerment, described by Adams (1996: 5) as being when "individuals, groups and communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals". In

this way, they work towards helping themselves and others to maximise the quality of their lives.

Adams explains the ways in which social work clients describe their experience of empowerment as feeling better and happier, feeling more in control of life, having increased self-esteem and enjoying the activities they are involved in (1996: 146).

A pivotal role for social workers, considering their qualifications, is that of **change agents** in empowerment processes.

Weyers (2001: 35 - 36), in describing the relationship between community development and community work, provides a clear description of the roles social workers can play as change agents. The obligation of social work practitioners to be change agents in terms of an ethical code principle is also pointed out, as well as what this implies when utilising their skills and knowledge in community work practices (2001: 52 & 56).

Rowlands (1998: 26) describes the valuable contribution that a qualified and skillful change agent can make as a catalyst for change. The skills required are, amongst others, "facilitation skills, active listening skills, non-directive listening skills". Such skills are inherently part of a social worker's basic equipment.

Attitudes considered as essential for a change agent to be effective relate to the open-ended nature of empowerment processes and include having and showing complete respect for others and their opinions, humility, a willingness to participate in learning and showing commitment.

Rowlands (1998:27-29) further describes the roles and requirements for workers and organisations in building alliances by the way they show commitment and support for development programmes. By adopting the roles of **allies**, they can assist in negotiations with government, donors and

other resources. Without imposing, they can thus ensure the continuation of programmes by assisting with the functions of evaluation, monitoring and reporting. Development programmes and projects often require longer periods than anticipated, therefore necessitating these competencies to be able to prove the need for continued support.

Accepting that development is a process, 'translating' the concept to other role players can provide a valuable supportive function for social workers by explaining how the empowerment of their clients can also be linked to tangible and visible changes.

Rowlands illustrates this by explaining that "You can build a well in a way that supports the empowerment of women by encouraging them to do the necessary analysis and decision making" and "you can teach women to read in a way which generates debate and analysis and which supports them to become more confident and more able to act" (1998:28).

Wieringa highlights this idea by explaining that projects often presented for women such as sewing courses, cooking and baking lessons, can also be empowering in the way in which they are presented, by encouraging discussions about subjects important to them such as finances and sexual violence (in Rowlands, 1998:29).

Acknowledging that these could be new and different roles for many practitioners, Rowlands points out that it might be worthwhile to explore 'new' approaches as well as a revision of the way 'old' approaches were used when entering the field of empowerment in social development (1998:29).

The **networking** role, described by Weyers (2001:102) as a marketing technique in the community work context, is another valuable function that social work practitioners could fulfil in social development programmes.

Networking involves one of the non-financial resources whereby contacts can be arranged with enabling institutions, government, resources, donors, organisations, associations and individuals.

The value of such contacts and linkages can mean the difference between stagnation and death or survival and growth for many development projects.

Homan (1994:116) considers networks as a base of power in a community as they can provide not only access to resources but also obtain the support from selected groups and people in a community. Emphasising the fact that social work practitioners should acknowledge that communities not only have needs, but also resources, a community resource or asset checklist concept is provided by Kretzman and McNight (in Homan, 1999:122). Such a checklist includes amongst others, community leaders, individuals, groups, organisations and institutions, utilising the strengths in the community.

Another role of strategic importance is that of **facilitator** in development programmes. Bergdall (2000:45–46) discusses the role of facilitators in promoting social development in rural areas by advancing the self-reliance of residents, referring to it as a 'delicate and fragile' position because of the messages they carry in everything they do. A strong sense of responsibility and insight into personal behaviour and working style is required. Their behaviour has to match the verbal messages of the facilitator. He explains that it would be counterproductive if, for instance, facilitators "arrive in new four wheel drive vehicles (*thereby*) communicating that they represent a resource rich organisation", while encouraging poor people to find local solutions by their own efforts.

3.5 Conclusion

From the foregoing it is evident that the main mechanisms, structures and role players in the field of social development who are responsible for

policymaking and execution, namely government authorities, welfare organisations and institutions, professional and other development workers, including social workers, are in place.

It is also clear that there are clear policy directions at national government level. Although provision is made for the implementation of procedures that would address many of the aspects of underdevelopment experienced on the ground at local level, the obstacles and problems preventing this implementation relate to a lack of capacity and sensitivity.

The references made to the way that welfare organisations and social workers respond to the changed social environment and new policy directives, indicate apparent resistance to change, ignorance, lack of skills, lack of commitment and inappropriate training.

However, social work is potentially a key player in social development, as it can bring inherent skills and knowledge to the process, albeit in roles different from the traditional.

From a practical point of view, it is considered fitting to examine instances and examples of good practice to address underdevelopment by means of social development approaches in different parts of the world. This can provide stimulation for and lead to the development of ideas of 'what could work' in local situations.

CHAPTER 4

GOOD PRACTICE EXPERIENCES IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

The demographics of South Africa show that women represent more than half of the South African population. The extent to which they suffer poverty and deprivation and lack basic quality of life standards have been highlighted.

The policies and structures that are in place with the purpose of contributing to social development and thereby to alleviate, counteract and render assistance have been indicated.

How to implement the policies and structures aimed at development to achieve their desired effect for women, leading to an improvements in their lives, seems to present a challenge to practitioners.

Gianotten, Groverman, Van Walsum and Zuidberg (1994) refer to a variety of development programmes aimed at women that have been implemented during the past few years and reason that it has now been realised that, if women are to benefit, their different needs and interests have to be taken into account in the planning phases. It is further considered essential that what may be part of planning actually takes place in the implementation of the programmes and that the voices and roles of women remain an up-front issue (Gianotten *et al.* 1994:11). In their book *Assessing the gender impact of development projects*, these authors describe field studies of development projects in three different developing countries and indicate, as 'critical conditions', that the institutions that have to implement these projects **must**

have the capacity to do so and that the attitude of the staff "is even more important than skills and capacity in the field of gender" (1994: 100-101).

Against this background, it is considered important to examine some common elements or themes present in development programmes that are found in the literature in which women have benefited and which therefore can be considered as criteria for 'good practice'.

A few enduring themes have been found to be present in many such programmes. These themes will be used as main elements or criteria for grouping descriptions of effective development programmes in different parts of the world.

The elements or criteria are:

- Participation in planning, decision making and implementation
- Women's groups, groupings and networks
- Learning, training and the acquiring of knowledge
- Innovation.

In identifying and exploring these elements from a social work perspective, it forces a turn about from the traditional problem orientation, focusing on clients' deficiencies, to a perspective that focuses and builds on strengths and capabilities, as described by Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi (2000:93). The application of these elements is found to be of specific relevance in community work and community development, as described by Weyers (2000), and in group work (Tropp, 1977) by viewing communities as clients (Homan 1994:23 – 27).

4.2 Participation

Changing the way decisions are made is believed to be at the heart of successful social development programmes.

This is achieved by what is referred to as 'bottom-up' approaches, with a strong emphasis on listening and asking on the part of development workers in order to make sure the "voices of the poor" (Whitehead & Lockwood, 1999:543) are accessed.

Weyers explains the importance of participation in the community development model and also indicates how it is applied in welfare-related projects (Weyers, 2001:110 - 135).

Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff distinguish between passive and active participation. They consider passive participation as a "one-way communication of information from a sponsoring agency which is easily manipulated ... to build patronage and tends to promote dependence" and which usually involves donations of money, labour or other resources, with the initiative coming from the donor (Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff, 2001:50).

In contrast, "active or full participation arises within a community and community members themselves are the agents of change," although they may work in cooperation with outside resources. The advantages are that leadership develops and organisations grow as a result of the initiatives they undertake (Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff, 2001:51).

This view has seen the development of many NGOs and community organisations in developing countries, as pointed out by Oakley and Clegg (1999:40) who refer to various studies illustrating the increasing role of local development organisations. These voluntary community organisations have been particularly prominent in respect of economic reform and income-generating programmes.

Other studies, by Gooneratne and Mbilinyi (1992), Bergdall (1993) and Cromwell (1996), have all contributed to examining the concept of participatory development within an African context and to show its increasing relevance and practice.

Abatena (1997:13-17) cites a selection of works to explain the reasons for grassroots participation in solving community problems. He reasons that a growing consensus considers participation "essential to successful implementation of local and regional programmes". Some of the side effects of such participation is the growth in leadership of community members, resulting in increased self-confidence and self-esteem and increased competence in addressing their problems themselves, thus moving away from the 'client' mentality.

The explanation of the reasons for and the significant advantages of grassroots participation provided by Abatena is most relevant for practitioners in social work, social welfare and social development.

Firstly, grassroots participation ensures "appropriate problem diagnosis and clear definition of the problem", which in turn will help to decide on "appropriate and feasible solutions".

Secondly, being involved in and actively participating in the process of deciding on solutions allows for a wider range of possible solutions, consideration of the practical aspects of implementing them as well as of their benefits and, most importantly, who the main beneficiaries are going to be. This cuts out the bad practice of growing bureaucracies and of a few benefiting at the cost of the rest.

Thirdly, participating in decision making about solutions help to ensure successful implementation, because people are more agreeable to do the things they themselves decided on or helped others to decide on. Programmes also stand a better chance of being sustained because of the community's self-

interest in it, their sense of pride and the personal learning benefits they experience. Successful implementation of initial programmes also often leads to other initiatives and projects.

Abatena quotes the following authors who describe community development programmes that illustrate the effectiveness of participation.

- Medoff and Sklar (in Abatena, 1997:27) show how problems at local community level are experienced on a very direct and personal level, leading to a stronger motivation to find solutions being shared by community members. The Dudley Street Neighbourhood in Boston, America, whose residents campaigned about crime, rubbish dumping, unsanitary conditions and poor housing, established an organisation 'to do something about it'. Subsequent to this, various community improvement projects were undertaken, following exercises on identifying, diagnosing and looking for solutions. Some of these projects were to clean up vacant areas and dumping grounds, persuading the local authority to remove abandoned motorcars, provide garbage dumpsters and institute regular garbage removal services, and lobbying the mayor to have the council stop dumping trash and garbage in the neighbourhood. The community members undertook repair work to houses and took actions aimed at crime control and crime prevention. Apart from a rebuilt and revitalised neighbourhood, another result was that businesses were prepared to open offices and shops in the area, thus not only bringing services, but also providing employment.
- Another case of a community working together to find solutions to their problems was described by Graham and Boyce (in Abatena, 1997:28). In the South Bronx area of New York, the community established a grassroots self-help organisation to 'do something about' the problem of derelict apartment buildings in their community. They started off by organising a boxing match to raise funds to buy building supplies and, with the help of

community members, set about renovating and restoring the buildings. The apartments were eventually sold at fair prices, part of which was for the coffers of the organisation and its members. This encouraged the organisation to continue as a restoration company, restoring more buildings and eventually being able to raise money for home loans to continue with this work as a business venture, with the assistance of the community and for their mutual benefit.

- Successful rural grassroots development programmes are found in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Ethiopia, where the communities were involved in defining and diagnosing the problems, seeking solutions, deciding on feasible goals, developing leadership, democratic group discussions, utilising existing community resources and obtaining essential assistance from outside sources and institutions (Abatena 1997:28).

The UNDP (United Nations Development Program) Gender in Development document on Good Practices [2000] highlights a number of case studies of development programmes based on community participation that were funded by the UN and other donors.

- One such is the Kishoregani project in Bangladesh [UNDP, 2000:7]. This project involved the formation of village groups or organisations (VOs) in the poor rural communities that provided training for both men and women in productive fields such as fish and poultry farming, sewing and bookkeeping, while at the same time establishing saving schemes, access to credit facilities and self-managed credit schemes. The project also included sensitising local government authorities and building links with a bank and other service providers. The multiplied benefits of this programme for the community were declining poverty, less crime and better services to the villagers and the villages, such as the establishment of schools. The two-pronged approach of "mobilising from below and sensitising at the top" is considered a key to ensure that a project that facilitates economic

involvement is also designed to lead to social mobilisation (UNDP, 2000:10). What is referred to as "a climate of empowerment", which was the effect of the project, had a number of additional benefits for the women, such as becoming more socially conscious and being elected to local government council structure positions.

- Another case deals with the economic empowerment of women in the Devin region in Bulgaria, where, as a result of the restructuring of state enterprises, unemployment became a serious problem especially amongst women. Government aid did not have much effect, as the "social welfare system still favoured a passive approach of monthly financial support instead of assessing the real needs of these women and empowering them to mobilise their own potential" [UNDP, 2000:53-54]. The 'Devin Project', based on a bottom-up participatory approach involving all stakeholders, namely government, municipal authorities, local communities and the private sector, meant that a business support centre was set up for unemployed women. The support centre provided information, consulting services, financial advice and mechanisms by means of a loan guarantee scheme for starting small businesses. Training and retraining, as well as technical assistance, were provided free to the unemployed women. One of the first successes was the establishment of a local textile company, providing employment, an outlet for products as well as an investment in a business venture [UNDP, 2000:55].
- To address the huge HIV/AIDS epidemic and to build on the "rich history of participatory development in India" [UNDP, 2000:24], an NGO partnership project was initiated to deal with the disease at grassroots level. The project was the result of a needs analysis by an expert team, which showed that 80% of AIDS initiatives were focused on awareness building and condom promotion and that the information material was not changing behaviour and that the care of people with AIDS was not receiving attention. By emphasising the participatory approach to

development and involving local organisations and "brokering dialogue between government and civil society" [UNDP, 2000:25], an understanding of the socio-economic effects of AIDS led to more NGOs becoming actively involved in training and incorporating HIV/AIDS into their programmes.

These examples of successful programmes bear testimony to the way in which members of groups and organisations have participated actively in solving their problems. The benefits of their empowerment and economic successes are proof of the side-effects spelled out by Abatena (1997:13).

4.3 Groups, organisations and networks

Tropp (1977:1322-1327) discusses the application of the social group work model in enhancing social functioning in a development context and shows how social workers, using a developmental approach and utilising their clients' competencies, can help them realise their full potential.

The valuable role of groups in community work is also described by Weyers (2001: 25-26) who indicates the purpose and focus of different types of groups found in this social work model.

The value placed by women on relationships plays an important role in the formation of groupings to promote their interests and as an instrument for their empowerment. Midgley (1995:124) comes to the conclusion that women must "mobilize" to collectively take on activities to promote their interests and development. Moser (in Midgley, 1995:75) refers to a number of women's organisations in different parts of the world that apply community development and community action techniques to realise their goals, such as DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), Gabriella, an alliance of women's groups campaigning for rights in the Philippines, and a group of low income, self-employed women in Ahmadabat organising

themselves to combat harassment and subsequently forming a bank and establish skills training and co-operations.

In South Africa, women's groups formed on religious, cultural, business or social and political grounds have proved valuable in giving women 'a voice' in many fields. The value of such groups and organisations for the development and empowerment of women is generally recognised.

Various authors have documented examples of women in many parts of the world who have succeeded in overcoming hardship and poverty by harnessing the power of their combined efforts.

- Tripp (1994:107-133) refers to numerous women's groups flourishing in Uganda and Tanzania to the great benefit for their members. Social transformation and economic survival are the main driving forces. The women utilise these groups and organisations for their own advancement, both economically and politically. Most of the organisations are small and informal and have a savings element. With the savings and built-up capital, new businesses are started or investments are made in existing businesses, school fees are paid or assistance is given in emergencies. Other groups established to generate income are involved in farming, tailoring, fishing or small enterprises selling foodstuffs. The good governance practices they apply are noteworthy in ensuring accountability by means of sound accounting and committee systems and practices.
- Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001:52) point out the value of women's groups in the success of many African projects aimed at managing natural resources, such as fish supplies, wetlands, soil and land. One of these, the WIADP (Women in Agriculture Development Project) in Malawi had the most far-reaching benefits, mainly as a result of women forming farm clubs to help them get access to credit, thereby ensuring that they are able to buy seeds, fertilisers and chemicals and that these loans are repaid in

full. In highlighting the benefits of forming alliances and networks with other sources and experts, the clubs got access not only to knowledge and skills, but also to funding from donors. The real value of collaboration and the formation of partnerships for support became clear when they experienced that, by discussing issues of common interest, they were able "to identify effective approaches to local development and resource management and broaden their capacity for flexible, innovative action" (Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff, 2001:53). The authors thus consider the existence of local organisations and groupings as an important indicator to assess the effectiveness of development projects.

Mosse (1993:162) found that "women's organisations offer the possibility of personal empowerment and change" and that those groups who initially dealt with specific issues such as health or employment were more successful and continued to be successful for longer, later on incorporating other areas of need and interests.

The experiences of women known as the 'paper pickers' in Ahmedabad in India bear proof of this theory (Mosse, 1993:162-164). These were unemployed, poor women who worked on the streets collecting waste paper, household rubbish, newspapers and office waste. This they sold to middlemen who sold it to recycling contractors. They were grossly exploited by the middlemen, who paid them only about 10% of the value of the waste they collected. However, their situation started changing when they became involved in SEWA (the Self-Employed Women's Association). SEWA started as a trade union, later established a bank and also ran training and support programmes for its members. As part of SEWA, the paper pickers could negotiate with business and the government for concessions to collect their waste paper. There was strong opposition to these arrangements in many quarters, as well as corruption and obstruction and the women faced many obstacles. One way to deal with it was to form a series of cooperatives. This collective position gave them confidence to investigate different solutions, such as learning the

details of the tender system and making public the corruption in local government concerning the allocation of contracts by naming the men and their positions in a documentary television programme on corruption. The results of these strategies were that the women received the quantities of paper due to them in terms of their contracts. Other hassles they faced were when the men's trucks tried to 'hijack' paper due to the women. They dealt with this by blockading the trucks and petitioning the relevant minister. In due course, they became known as 'a force to be reckoned with' and moved on to becoming involved in the recycling process itself, as well as acquiring warehouses. They also extended their programmes in new cooperatives for ex-paper pickers and developed other enterprises, such as weaving, cleaning and electric wiring.

- Another development programme involving women in rural India, described by Friedland (1992:199-200), deals with the way in which farmers' clubs handled problems in a collective way to deliver health services in isolated farming communities. Initially, a clinic was opened and city-trained nurses provided preventive health care. Because of cultural differences, i.e. the nurses being from different, more sophisticated backgrounds, they did not get much cooperation from the community in combating diseases and illnesses and the service was not successful. The women farmer's clubs were concerned about the need for basic health care and came up with the idea of training local women in the basic skills of preventive health care. Some of the requirements were practical considerations such as that they were middle-aged, married and had roots in the area. Although some were not even literate they became very effective in identifying illnesses at an early stage, instituting family planning practices and involving farmers' club members in health promotion and maintenance. One such practice was to involve the male farmers' clubs to assist with the regular measurement of children's height and helping to keep an eye on their physical development. The women's clubs, apart from assisting with health care activities, also started

cooperatives and other community activities. In the process, they gained sufficient confidence to apply for loans to start small business enterprises. The clubs serve an important function as forums where they can discuss and solve their problems on their own and thus serve as an important avenue for their empowerment.

- Wadia and Colón [2000], in their article *Women's Enterprise Development: Strategies for Success*, describe the Ms Foundation for Women, an American organisation that administers donor funding aimed at women in micro enterprises, women's networks of small business cooperatives and community businesses. Assistance is given in the form of training and access to markets for homemade products. One such network of micro-enterprises is the Appalachian By Design (ABD) organisation, which trains low-income rural women to knit jerseys and make high quality home furnishings on handlooms in their homes. Through networks and contacts with other groups, ABD has developed outlets for these products in upmarket retailers, providing a good income for the 'home industry' women.

The value of forming alliances and networks for collaboration in development programmes is borne out by the women's groups that form part of the Flagship Programmes of the Department of Social Development (2000). In many of these programmes, an important element of their success has been the intersectoral cooperation with other departments, parastatals, NGOs and private sector institutions.

- Nkomazi Flagship Project near Nelspruit in Mpumalanga (Department of Social Development, 2000:23) has been running vegetable gardens, poultry farming and a bakery for the benefit of its members. The women have built networks and working relationships with a number of institutions, amongst other with a financial institution, the Department of Agriculture, the Small Business Advisory Bureau, the Suid-Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie

and a pesticide company. In this way, they have gained access to various forms of assistance for their different projects.

- The women of Bekkersdal Flagship Project near Westonarea in Gauteng (Department of Social Development, 2000:27) have been working in cooperation with officials from different government departments, such as Health, Agriculture and Labour. In addition, they have been collaborating with a Technical College, a mining group and a catering business towards empowering their members. The wide-ranging activities of the programme include running a restaurant, a food garden, a car wash scheme, an overnight facility, a beauty parlour, sewing and clothing design and a recreation centre.
- In the Karoo town of Beaufort West, the women of the Beaufort West Community Garden Project (Department of Social Development, 2000:11) have successfully built cooperation and support through relationships with departmental officials of Agriculture and Health, some local NGO's, the local government authority and Transnet. This has helped the women to achieve considerable results in not only preparing the soil for the gardens, but erecting a shade net and tunnels for vegetable growing, as well as a seedling house, fencing the gardens and planting olive trees, prickly pears and lucern.

These examples show how women's organisations and by forming alliances and networks, women have been able to establish successful groupings and alliances to promote their interests and empowerment objectives.

4.4 Learning, training and development

There probably would be general agreement that the processes of learning and acquiring knowledge and skills should form part of all development programmes and projects.

According to Weyers (2001), education forms a particularly important part of community work in South Africa “because of the legacy of the past, there is an exceptionally large need” to “eliminate the disempowerment of ignorance by improving the literacy and skills levels of communities” (2001:162-163). A variety of techniques are suggested that can be utilised by practitioners, including formal training, educational group work, workshops, drama and theatre, and the use of visual material, special events and programmes (Weyers, 2001:167-187).

Apart from the fact that many women in South Africa have not had access to formal education in the past, they also often miss out on remedial programmes such as literacy classes or other adult education programmes due to cultural factors, time constraints, distance to facilities or other commitments. These factors contribute further to a state of underdevelopment, as discussed earlier (Midgley, 1995:72). Women are also often overlooked due to a lack of gender sensitivity on the part of organisations offering programmes to address educational needs. Thus, a need for education, not only 'for' women, but also 'about' women, for those responsible for instituting development programmes becomes necessary to ensure their successful inclusion in such projects.

Some examples of good practice programmes that indicate how the benefits of providing opportunities for learning to women are paying off in many ways are the following:

- The Ms Foundation for Women [Wadia and Colón, 2000], which supports women's enterprise development, soon realised that to assist low-income women meaningfully, they must be equipped with skills and knowledge to enable them to compete and flourish in competitive business environments. Training and technical assistance in "business, financial and marketing skills and peer support" were considered as keys to success [Wadia and Colón, 2000:4]. For women who previously received welfare

support, this kind of know-how is often considered more important than loan capital.

- An important way to address poverty is not only through an increase in income as a result of small enterprises, but also by "acquiring and building wealth and assets" (Wadia and Colón, 2000:6). This is achieved by utilising special savings programmes aimed at purchasing a first home or paying for education or job training, accompanied by economic literacy training. These measures go hand in hand towards economic security for many previously poor families.

Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001:50) consider training as an 'enabling condition', as explained in their article describing the important roles played by women in donor-driven farming projects in Africa. To this extent, they proclaim that "Effectiveness of extension services and training emerges from all the cases as central to their success". Training was found to be an integral part of all the projects on which they reported.

- At the basic level, the Kenyan Women's Group (Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff 2001:50), who mastered the skills to successfully manage herds of 'exotic' jersey cows, had initially been taught proper upkeep methods for their animals and their fodder requirements. Subsequently, this training was followed by special regular field days on the best methods to raise calves, good cow maintenance techniques and feed management. In addition, the responsible government department officials paid regular supervisory visits to the farms, which further assisted with the learning process. The relevant authority ensured that knowledge was also imparted on aspects such as record keeping and credit management, as well as about market conditions, in addition to good farming and livestock practices.
- On another level, but equally necessary, was the training of officials from the relevant authority involved in the Women in Agriculture Development

project in Malawi (Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff 2001:50), to re-orientate them towards gender awareness. As part of the same project, female officials involved in the project had to be trained in specialised agricultural project management as opposed to the home economics topics that traditionally were considered relevant and suitable for women. At the policy level, gender awareness had to be made an issue in order to ensure that women would be included in all agricultural training sessions. At ministerial level, interdisciplinary cooperation was brought about between agricultural and social scientists, and this filtered through to bring about changes in the attitudes of field workers.

Training and development have also proved to be important for the women participating in the Flagship Programmes of the Department of Social Development. The effects are particularly noticeable in the programmes considered to be the more successful ones.

- Training in project management, financial management, record keeping and marketing skills has been particularly significant for the members of the Babinachne Women's Multipurpose Project in the Northern Province (Department of Social Development, 2000:3). It augmented the courses they underwent in seedling production and pest and disease control and contributed towards them becoming confident and sufficiently equipped to run and continue to manage the project on their own.
- The women of the Beaufort West Project in the Western Cape (Department of Social Development, 2000:11) have also progressed towards independence, thanks to the training they received not only in aspects of gardening, such as advanced methods of irrigation, hot house management and the use of pesticides, but also in bookkeeping, administration and meeting procedures. The fact that they have used the money that they received for winning a competition towards further training, is proof of the value they attach to learning.

- The Cross Roads Project in the Western Cape (Department of Social Development, 2000:13), whose members are involved in textile and paper design and printing, have been able to develop their leadership skills in addition to their design and manufacturing capabilities. This additional knowledge and skills will enable them to extend the project in a more businesslike manner.
- Training enabled the women of the Bekkersdal Project in Gauteng (Department of Social Development, 2000:28) to develop sound business acumen in providing opportunities for the training of chefs, waitresses and clerks as well as training in purchasing skills, thereby equipping them to function effectively in the catering trade.
- The women of the Azalea Project in Kwazulu/Natal (Department of Social Development, 2000:40), whose activities include sewing, poultry farming and fence-making, have found their quality of life improving in many ways as a result of the successes of these activities, which they have been able to achieve due to the effective and advanced training they received.
- In his extensive research study on community participation in Ethiopia, Bergdall (2000) proves the value of spending time and effort on training trainers and facilitators responsible for development programmes. The avoidance of "long and boring" lectures in favour of interactive, mutual learning workshops provided the required learning experiences that could be carried through by the facilitators to the implementation of programmes in the communities (Bergdall, 2000: appendix, 4:3). By utilising 'stories of change' methods, the community groups could experience that they themselves, by their own efforts, can bring about changes in their living environments. This method allowed the community groups to share their opinions about development. The groups were encouraged and facilitated to determine their own priorities and to decide on plans of action. They developed new insights by understanding that they could solve many of

their problems on their own, as well as by working together - in this way developing collective empowerment. Some of the results were that they initiated and organised cleaning-up operations of their surroundings, such as keeping a stream clean for use as drinking water and improved paths. They developed knowledge about the relationship between health and sanitation and acknowledged the extent to which they had widened their horizons on development. This participatory learning approach is considered "crucially important for projects that encourage people to become agents of their own development" (Bergdall, 2000:ix).

It is clear that the advantages of learning as part of development programmes contribute vastly to the total empowerment process of the participants. Therefore, learning on different levels, as determined by the needs of members, has to be considered crucial to any programme if it is to become sustainable and long term.

4.5 Innovation

Accepting that development is a process and a dynamic concept, which implies that growth and change are to be expected, innovation should be considered as a criterion for effective development programmes.

Weyers (2001:201-203) describes the way in which new ideas are dealt with in community work practices and the characteristics of innovators, pointing out that social workers have to accept that people differ in how they accept new ideas.

Peter Drucker, quoted in the Harvard Business Review (1998:149) on innovation as an important element of entrepreneurship, listed the qualities that are associated with innovation. Some of these are that innovation is simple, it starts small, it requires knowledge and often ingenuity, as well as hard work and diligence. It also often follows on initial failures.

A number of good practice development programmes have shown that innovation is an element that can contribute to their effectiveness.

Innovation was one of the motivations for the Department of Social Development (2000) to implement the Flagship Programmes, which involve start-up pilot projects aimed at the economic empowerment of unemployed poor women. Significantly, it appears that the programmes that seem to be the most successful also show a higher indication of innovative behaviour.

- The Bekkersdal Project in Gauteng (Department of Social Development, 2000: 28) with its variety of activities, some of which would not be considered as 'typical women's' projects, such as a car wash scheme or buying a caravan to renovate and convert into a mobile kitchen, has shown a great deal of ingenuity by the women. Their diligence and marketing of their services are supporting their innovation to extend their services into new ventures, such as catering and laundry services.
- The Northern Cape Project in Fraserburg a meat producing area, (Department of Social Development, 2000:15), called itself the Tripe and Trotters Joy Project, originally was successful, but declined and came to a halt as a result of several factors. Revival activities have included new business plans, community involvement, a visit to a successful Flagship project in another area, and further training. It is expected that the project has potential to become successful again, by building on the new knowledge and experience gained by the members.

Critchley (1999), in a UNDP report on farmer innovation in East Africa, identified that a useful source of inspiration for farmers with successful, innovative ideas was the fact that they had travelled to other areas and seen other successful projects. Another significant source of inspiration proved to be training. The most important reason given as motivation for starting innovative projects proved the close link to a need to improve living

conditions, namely 'income generation'. The study, which looked at farmers in the dry regions of East Africa, found that projects aimed at water retention and the imaginative use of trash and compost, together with soil conservation methods for food production, were the most common projects that the farmers were involved in.

- One noteworthy example was Mkpe Mkatalo of Tanzania (Critchley 1999:55), who established an effective forest management system based on the indigenous *mpululu* tree. His plot of land was initially bare, without any trees, until he noticed regular shoots of the *mpululu* being eaten by his livestock. After first putting his livestock in camps, he started managing the trees by pruning the lower branches to produce straight poles without knobs. In this way, a robust forest developed with a healthy annual yield, and many neighbours followed his example. The *mpululu* has multiple uses in the construction industry, for toolmaking, as fodder and as fuel. Apart from providing a steady income, the forest has also maintained a cooler microclimate around his farm, a welcome additional benefit in the hot climate.
- The piece of land belonging to Grace Bura of Tanzania (Critchley, 1999:57) was badly eroded, with 'dongas' all over the field. By developing a method to fill up the dongas by alternative layers of rubbish and soil, she planted cuttings of tree cassava, a tropical plant with starchy roots. As the dongas filled up she extended the same pattern over the rest of the plot to form contours. She alternates the cassava crop, from which she uses the leaves as vegetables and for feeding her cows, with wheat crops. What is not used is dug into the dongas as green manure along with cow manure.
- Oluka Stanley of Uganda (Critchley, 1999:66) read somewhere 'that a wise man can change rubbish into riches' and started collecting dung along the cow tracks. This he mixed with household rubbish to dig into his fields. The resulting better crops convinced him to continue expanding on his

methods. He then started putting the cow dung in small pits, to which he added dry leaves and covered it with soil to make compost. Seeing the results, his neighbours started following his example and cow dung has now become a scarce commodity in the area.

- Social worker Van de Venter (Peters, 2001) who worked in the poor community of Roodewal outside Worcester in the Western Cape and had to deal with the effects of social problems such as gangsterism, child neglect, street children, alcoholism and unemployment, could see no real solutions after her various 'traditional' interventions. Establishing the El-Shammah kibbutz in Roodewal proved an innovative solution to address a number of these social problems. By means of running the project on the principles of a kibbutz system, with self-employment and co-responsibility as criteria and an elected management committee as governing body, the members gained dignity and self-respect. The project has seen the members develop building skills by erecting the buildings required for the kibbutz, such as a hall, a crèche and a few houses, and gradually advancing to becoming sufficiently skilled to be employed in the building industry. Income-generating projects, such as vegetable and fruit farming, provide employment and the kibbutz lifestyle provides not only emotional support structures, but also socialisation and a vibrant and stimulating social life that includes performing arts, singing, dancing and poetry events.
- "The women of Zaire grow most of the country's food" (Mosse, 1993:129). In an attempt to increase food production, a new variety of cassava, a staple food, was introduced. Although it increased the food supply, it had a disadvantage for the women. The special qualities of the new variety necessitated that the women had to harvest it more often, adding considerably to their already heavy workload. Its different, tougher root system also made the harvesting more difficult. An innovative solution was provided by an Oxfam-funded project which helped them to acquire

oxen to use in preparing the lands for sowing. The women soon started utilising the oxen also for other tasks, such as pulling carts and other transportation functions, as well as for ox-drawn weeders alongside the ploughs when working the lands. They soon also realised their value for household tasks, such as grinding grain, thus finding help in an unexpected and very versatile source!

4.6 Conclusion

Innovation can be considered as a special ingredient in social development programmes that can contribute significantly to their success and therefore deserves to be encouraged and promoted. There seem to be different ways and measures that can contribute to the development of a culture of innovation among members of development programmes, particularly exposure to other projects and extended training.

CHAPTER 5

THE PERCEPTIONS AND VIEWS OF MEMBERS OF A FEW SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

5.1 Introduction

Social workers have an important role to play and a contribution to make by utilising the social development approach to address the problems brought about by underdevelopment and poverty in the country.

Their capabilities and skills that are suitable for this function are made clear by McKendrick (2001:105-111) who spells out the positive and appropriate qualities of their profession for this function. Various ways in which social workers, by utilising their community organisation expertise, have been instrumental in successful social development programmes has been described by Midgley (1996: 20-23).

However, social workers are not seen to be meaningfully involved in social development practices. This means that many of their clients miss out on the empowering benefits that inherently are part of such practices and programmes. Some of the benefits of empowerment for clients, namely that they are happier and experience an increase in feelings of self-esteem and control, has been highlighted by Adams (1996:146).

Against this background, the researcher examined certain dimensions, elements and criteria identified as instrumental in social development programmes in an attempt to assist in demystifying the field and providing some guidelines. In this way, knowledge can hopefully be generated that will be suitable for the social work profession to “accomplish the primary purpose

of the profession - helping clients to help themselves" (Williams, Tutty & Grinnell, 1995: 18).

The **objectives of the study** were to describe the nature and dimensions of the empowerment of women from a social development perspective; to identify criteria considered good practice for improving the chances of success when implementing development programmes aimed at women and to describe the experiences of women involved in a few Western Cape projects in terms of these criteria.

These objectives were formulated to achieve the **aim of the study**, namely to present guidelines for organisations and practitioners in the fields of social welfare, social work and social development, to implement and manage programmes aimed at the social development and welfare of women.

This chapter deals with the fieldwork undertaken amongst the members of a few selected social development projects in the Western Cape.

It begins with an overview of the methodology and processes followed by the researcher to provide a summary of the procedures, organisation and steps taken for gathering the data (Reamer, 1998:366-370; Neuman, 2000:474).

5.2 Research method

The **design** of the study is considered to be explorative and descriptive. Grinnell (1988:225) explains that exploratory research is suitable when the area of research is not well developed and therefore it is more "sensible" to apply this design as a method of inquiry. The research concerns an area about which not much is known in this country, namely an understanding of the success factors in social development projects (Grinnell in De Vos, 1998:124). Thus, as basic research, the focus of the study was to explore and describe dimensions and aspects of development and the empowerment of women, to identify

success factors as themes in social development projects and to describe the experiences of women in terms of these themes.

The **qualitative** research approach was chosen in view of the evaluative nature of the study, although it was not intended as an evaluation of specific programmes and their effectiveness and achievements, but was aimed at determining the personal experiences and views of members of such programmes.

This approach was thought to be the most appropriate considering the objective of the investigation, which was to describe and understand, rather than explain, the experiences and behaviour of members of social development projects (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 270).

Weighing up the advantages of qualitative information when monitoring development programmes, Bergdall (2000:150) makes a convincing case by emphasising the value of personal 'stories and anecdotes' to describe change as being "crucial clues to understanding the dynamics of empowerment". Empowerment is considered to be at the base of successful social development programmes.

5.2.1 Preparation

The process of preparation involved conceptualising the research methodology, identifying possible subjects and settings and explaining the benefits, purpose and methods to various "gatekeepers and subjects" (Schurink, 1998b:257). It included the following:

- o Visits to four district offices of the Western Cape Department of Social Services to discuss and obtain names and information on, as well as arrange access to social development projects involving women that are funded by the department in terms of a national Poverty Relief Fund scheme.

- Obtaining similar information on such projects from the Foundation for Community Work (FCW), a Cape-based community development organisation.
- Contacting the projects selected as part of the sample to arrange preliminary visits.

5.2.2 *Sample*

A non-probability sampling technique was applied. A purposive sample of five development projects was selected based on the researcher's judgement (Strydom and De Vos, 1998:198).

The choice of projects in the sample was made on conceptual, not representative grounds, taking into account their settings and individual processes (Miles and Huberman, 1994; 30 - 31), as well as for practical reasons of accessibility and the time factor. Therefore, the five projects were chosen on account of geographical spread between urban and rural areas, length of time in existence (1 year+), having organisational structures in place and having significant female involvement. Four projects were selected from the lists of projects provided by the district offices of the Department of Social Services and one obtained from FCW (Foundation for Community Work). Activities of projects included in the sample covered food gardening, pre-school facilities, sewing, craft-making, a bakery, provision of meals, fruit tree groves, handwork and wirework.

This was done on the understanding that projects in the sample would have similar characteristics to the other projects on the lists obtained from the department of Social Services and FCW. Thus conclusions could be drawn about the characteristics of all the projects (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990:53), as well as allowing for the specific "types of individual", in this case women, as subjects of the study.

At the request of the researcher, the project members themselves selected participants of not more than six members per focus group. Smaller groups are believed to provide more opportunity for participation, with increased satisfaction of the members and allowing more interaction between them, thereby also contributing to positive feelings amongst them (Dimock, 1987:26). A total of 23 women participated in the sample of five focus groups. The groups in the sample represented a total of 87 project members.

Introductory visits were made to all five groups prior to the focus group sessions to discuss the purpose and process of the sessions and to obtain permission and cooperation from the project members for doing the study.

These visits also served the purpose of initial site visits, providing information on the physical environments and settings of the different groups. The influence and effect that the environment can have on personal experiences is explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985:189) as being part of the context in which behaviour should be studied. It was also a means of building rapport and trust with the members of the groups and to gain understanding of their settings, which is described by Janesick (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:211-212) as seeing the context within which participants function, thereby being able to look at the "whole picture" of their working experiences. The interplay of relationships between project members, leadership roles and aspects of culture and habit could also be observed. General information was obtained about their history, future aspirations, as well as problem areas.

Table 5.1 reflects the background information and project characteristics of the five projects represented by the sample of five focus groups. Information was obtained from the two referring sources (Department of Social Services and FCW), from the members and from observations.

Table 5.1: Background information and characteristics of focus groups projects

DEMO-GRAPHICS	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	GROUP E
Setting	Housed in a semi-detached building in a residential township of a medium- size rural town	Housed in a shipping container in a residential township in an urban area	Church yard and sections of a church building in a residential township in an urban area	Housed in section of community development building in small rural town	Housed in shipping containers in residential township in urban area
Age of project	18 months	2 years	4 years	8 years	3 years
Origin	Government's poverty relief funding for mothers of young children	Community outreach project for job creation and skills training	Evolved from a soup kitchen for undernourished children & poverty relief funding	RDP [Reconstruction & Development Programme] Government's poverty relief funding 1997/98	Government's poverty relief funding and unemployed social work clients
Total membership	5	14	36	27	5
Activities	Bakery, runs as a small enterprise	Sewing, baking, youth outreach; life skills training	Food gardens & child care	Sewing, daily meal service, crafts, date & olive groves	Sewing, knitting, crafts
Support structures	A bookkeeper assists with financial management. Training paid for by Dept. of Social Services	Professional mentor assisting with needs assessments	Dept. of Social Services paid for training; Local council interest & support	District council manages finances; provides active, practical support	Medical School, International donor, mentor
Atmosphere and culture	Rigid working schedules of 2 shifts. Age difference between members	Comradeship amongst members; active community awareness	Optimism & positive outlook; group cohesion	Group cohesion in one active part of project; Other part is long-term and dormant	Commitment & pride in workmanship
Concerns	Isolation; Requires additional equipment to expand activities	Requires suitable and convenient venue for activities	Requires resources to expand activities to more members	Lacks wider community participation & involvement	Dependence on donor and mentor

The information in Table 5.1 shows some commonalities, as well as differences between the five projects. Commonalities include the fact that the venues used by all the projects for their activities are semi-permanent or makeshift accommodation. Most of the projects include members who receive government poverty relief funding. A positive atmosphere relating to their work, as well as sound interrelationships, were particularly evident at four of the projects. Three of the projects include activities that have to do with the production or preparation of food. Two of the projects have bookkeeping services provided by outsiders. All the projects have clear ideas of what their needs and concerns are. These vary and include infrastructure, equipment, wider community involvement and greater independence.

5.2.3 Method for data collection

Focus groups were chosen as the preferred method in view of the qualitative data that was required and the 'information rich' way in which "people's feelings, thinking, perceptions and point of view" (Krueger and Casey, 2000:10) could be obtained.

Homogeneous groups, in which all participants were members of social development projects, were used to provide data on their experiences of these projects in terms of certain predetermined criteria.

The key characteristic distinguishing focus groups, namely the interaction between the participants to provide information and insight [Gibbs, 1997], was found to be especially beneficial.

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:16), make a convincing argument for the decision to use focus groups for this study by spelling out various advantages of focus groups, such as the interactive way of obtaining information from groups of people in a relatively brief period in cost effective ways and obtaining results that are easily understood.

Another advantage was the flexibility provided by focus groups, which Morgan (1997: 16) points out as possibly their “greatest strength”. This flexibility provided the respondents and researcher scope to focus discussions, while also adjusting to differences in the composition, interests and levels of sophistication of the different groups.

The benefits to the respondents in the focus groups, namely feeling to be of value and “involved in something which they feel will make a difference”, thereby experiencing a sense of empowerment [Gibbs, 1997:3], was considered a positive byproduct of this method.

5.2.4 Instrument

The focus group sessions were conducted with the aid of an interview guide in the form of semi-structured, open-ended questions (Annexures A and B).

The format of the interview guide allowed for meticulous and ample note taking of the responses on the standardised forms.

The question guide was decided on as the most suitable method for collecting data to cover the topics that the researcher wanted to study and, as pointed out by Miles and Huberman (1994:35), to focus the discussions, thus preventing an overload of extra and unwanted information.

Another benefit of such a question guide, namely that the same topics of discussion follow the same order for all the groups (Morgan, 1997: 47), was also considered relevant.

Using open-ended questions in the question guide was considered most appropriate to obtain information on feelings and views, thus covering a broader field by allowing respondents more freedom in their choice of responses (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 74).

The open-ended questions in the guide allowed for variety in individual responses to specific topics, thereby limiting the structural character of the sessions. It also provided the opportunity for discussion amongst respondents and for the researcher to observe reactions and behaviour.

The questionnaire served as a map for the path that would be followed by the researcher when dealing with the specific issues considered relevant to the field of study, namely to elicit the views and feelings of respondents based on their experiences as members of social development projects.

Neuman (2000:420) points out that themes and concepts, rather than variables, serve as the analytical tools for qualitative studies.

To this end the question guide covered the topics spelled out in the objectives of the study, namely to investigate women's experiences relating to their empowerment and their views on certain elements identified as criteria for good practice in development programmes. Therefore, the questions dealt specifically with the respondents' perceptions and views, based on their experiences in respect of the following criteria:

Participation, considered an essential element for successful social development projects and supporting the broad benefits spelled out by Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001:51) and Abatena (1997:13), namely that leadership develops and problems are identified and solved at grassroots level.

Training and development as elements of development projects are particularly relevant in view of the lack of education and learning opportunities for many women. Poor, uneducated women stand very little chance of being formally employed. The inherent value of training for women involved in poverty reduction programmes has been described amply. Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001: 50) and Bergdall (2000:ix) use examples from various studies that illustrate the fact that training is essential for the

success of projects and that knowledge at all levels provides building blocks for development.

Women's groups and networks form an important element of many development projects for women. Tripp (1994:107-133), Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001:52) and Mosse (1993:162-164) have described their value, emphasising the benefits of cooperation among groups with similar interests.

Innovation was identified as a criterion for successful projects and considered as an element of good practice for development projects by Critchley (1999) and Mosse (1993).

Empowerment, which encapsulates the changes experienced by members as a result of their involvement in development projects, both on a personal group levels, is viewed as fundamental to such projects.

The changes experienced by women as a result of earning an income, access to training and participation in development programmes have been described as improvements in their self-esteem and experiencing a sense of dignity (Schurink in De Vos, 1998; Rowlands, 1998; Kabeer, 1999).

By 'weaving' through these topics, the question guide provided sufficient *flexibility* in the discussions to "skip over areas that have already been covered" (Morgan, 1997: 48) and to allow for interventions or deviations that occurred during the sessions.

Fig. 5.1 illustrates the interrelatedness of the four elements namely participation, women's groups and networks, training and development and innovation, which are considered as criteria in successful social development projects resulting in empowerment.

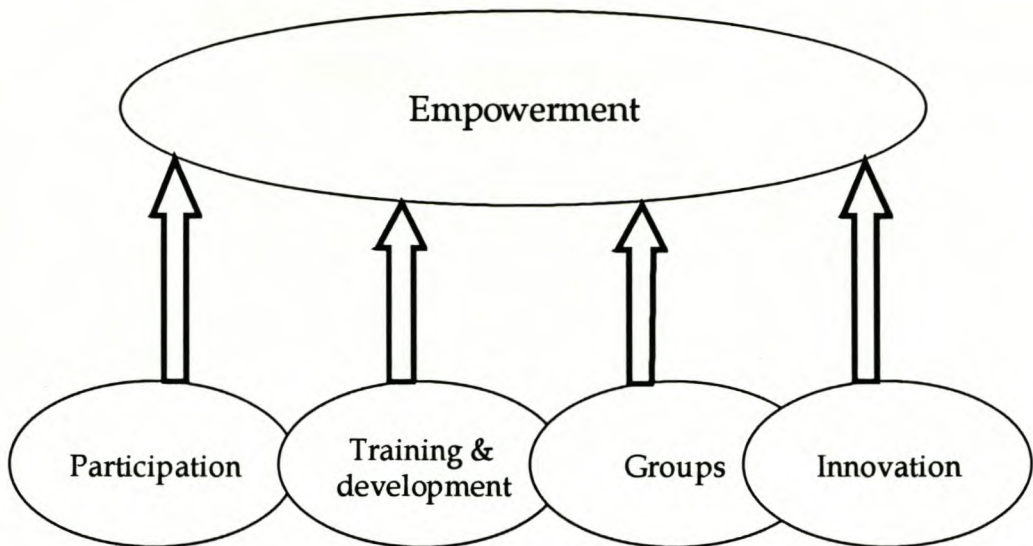


Fig. 5.1: Elements of successful social development projects resulting in empowerment

Glaser is quoted in Miles and Huberman (1994:44) as referring to the “fit” of elements that are at the base of “what is going on” in order to “explain, predict and interpret” the outcome, in this case empowerment. It becomes clear that the ‘elusive’ concept of empowerment relies on the changes experienced by women as a result of being exposed to these elements, which have been identified as contributing to successful development projects.

A **pilot study** was done with a women’s handwork group to test the question guide in terms of flow, understanding of and reaction to questions, as well as the time it takes. The other advantages of doing a pilot study, namely to focus on new or previously unclear areas and to establish communication techniques, were further considerations (Janesick in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

The **venues** used for the focus group sessions were at the workplaces of the projects. In some instances the work of the projects was carried on during the session.

The value of carrying out studies in their natural settings is expounded by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 189–191), who explain that “the world in which they are experienced”, forms an integral part of behaviour patterns. In their familiar surroundings subjects are thus more comfortable and likely to act in their ‘normal’ ways.

The sessions took place during the period 16 May to 24 May 2002.

5.2.5 Challenges and limitations

Challenges were presented by the disturbances caused by unavoidable interruptions during some of the sessions as well as by the fact that essential tasks had to carry on during some sessions. These interruptions affected the flow of the discussions and might have inhibited responses.

The language barrier, as some respondents were Xhosa speaking, might also have been a hindrance in getting across the exact meanings of words and concepts.

In view of the qualitative nature of the data, the results of the survey are not quantifiable and fully verifiable, biases may exist and, due to confidentiality agreements, the reliability of the data, which is in the form of words, can be considered as relatively imprecise and diffused (Neuman, 2000: 418). These limitations can be countered, to some extent, by the fact that the sample consisted of five unrelated groups and that standardised question guides and standardised recording forms were used. (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 292 & 294).

Perhaps the pronouncement by Norman Denzin should provide some consolation, namely that “all texts are biased, reflecting the play of class, race, ethnicity, and culture, suggesting that so-called objective interpretations are impossible” (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 507).

5.3 Findings

The social development projects included in the study are largely independently run, relying mainly on the self-determination and self-sufficiency of the members, who are all involved on a voluntary basis.

It therefore can be accepted that the focus group participants are sources of 'rich information' as they experience the dynamics of being co-responsible for the success or failure of their income-generating development projects.

The discussions and replies to the question-guide provided respondents with opportunities for introspection and reflection on their personal experiences in the projects.

Thus they could reflect on the 'how' and 'why' of successes, obstacles and requirements when responding to the following topics of the question guide.

5.3.1 *Participation*

The advantages of participation in social development projects, described by Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001), Oakley and Clegg (1999) and Abatena (1997), were echoed by respondents in the focus group sessions. They described how they involve members and the extent to which members should be participating in all aspects of their projects.

The researcher believes that participation is a major element of success in social development projects. For this reason, abbreviated information on the respondents' views on participation is firstly displayed in a checklist matrix format, which is described by Miles and Huberman (1994:105) as suitable for the analysis of "field data on a major variable or...domain of interest".

Table 5.2 shows some responses by focus group participants on ways to get members participating and involved in projects.

Table 5.2: Summary of focus group feedback on participation

Participation	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
To get members involved	All involved, plan together and accept ownership	Show respect and understanding, share information	Individual members share their experiences and benefits of project with newcomers	Create feelings of togetherness and belonging, share tasks, all members provide input for project activities	Preparedness to learn from one another, patience, learn to show respect
Involvement in planning	Agreement that all must be part of planning	Involve from initial stages; all must be fully informed	All members discuss and decide together on project plans	Have open discussions of all proposals	All members have equal say in plans
Division of work	All members share in allocation of tasks	Coordinator asks for volunteers for different tasks	Members decide according to their interests	Asked to volunteer according to interest, skills & knowledge	Coordinator assesses competencies and accordingly asks for volunteers
Obtaining funding & new members	Proposals are encouraged at meetings; task teams appointed	All members share responsibility	All members are encouraged to think & to discuss ideas	Everybody is aware of needs and is encouraged to share responsibility	Discussed at weekly meetings; co-ownership is encouraged
Handling problems	All members must discuss problems together	Depending on type of problem - can be referred for professional help or discussed by all	Group discussion of problem and possible solutions	Problems must be 'brought into the open' & handled in the project	Members discuss openly; acquire problem-solving techniques; those causing problems apologise
Deciding on leadership	All members decide together	Members elect leaders at annual meetings	Leaders elected annually; committee members elected as nominated	All members elect leaders annually	All members elect leadership

The results shown in table 5.2 indicate the strong feelings expressed by respondents about the importance of participation in different aspects of the projects.

There was general consensus amongst the respondents in all the focus groups that they have to make deliberate efforts to get members involved and to participate in different processes of their projects.

To get prospective and new members involved, one of the respondents described how comradeship and feelings of togetherness are created by sharing and telling about their own experiences, thus confirming the power of 'stories of change', described by Bergdall (2000), to get participation at different levels in development projects.

Some respondents pointed out that they considered a positive outlook a great help to attract and assimilate new members.

Other practical measures described by some of the respondents involved the holding of special information workshops for newcomers to help them identify their training needs and their attributes, capabilities and interests.

Such workshops provide opportunities for doing needs assessments, as described by Homan (1999:118-121), which allow not only for highlighting unmet needs, but also to identify resources. To recognise and build on existing capabilities can be a strong element to empower groups in community work practices by identifying possible existing capabilities and resources (Kretzman and McNight in Homan, 1999:122). Thus, by applying the strength perspective (Saleebey in Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi, 2000:93) in such sessions, long-lasting change and motivation can develop in the groups.

Some respondents explained that the way in which they encourage participation and cooperation is to build team spirit by sharing tasks, singing while they work, sharing ideas amongst everybody, chatting and telling jokes.

Most respondents considered it important that members must at all times be kept fully informed of all aspects of the project, thereby encouraging participation and engendering feelings of ownership, as described by Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001: 56), in order to prolong the lifetime of projects.

The necessity for perseverance was referred to on a number of occasions. It was emphasised that members must be prepared to persevere and to persist with what they set out to do, even when they face obstacles. A respondent who felt particularly strong about this said

“members have to accept that a development project is like a small tree, it takes time to grow and it needs regular watering and feeding to grow, therefore they must be prepared to start small and to keep going”

Other respondents felt that participation is encouraged when members are prepared to help one another, thereby building sound interrelationships. In this way they act as role models and assist in changing perceptions and helping to promote the development of self-esteem and mutual respect (Mosse, 1993: 171).

The respondents were in full agreement that all members should have a say and participate in decision making relating to all aspects of their projects. Taking part in planning the work and the allocation of tasks was considered by all respondents to be necessary in order to get members fully committed.

Some respondents indicated that, by involving members from an early stage, it is ensured that they

“feel ownership and will buy in from the beginning because they feel partly responsible”

This view supports Abatena's theory (1997:23) that involvement in planning increases the “prospects of successful program implementation”, because people tend to support decisions they made themselves or were part of.

Most respondents expressed the view that work should be allocated according to personal interest as well as the skills and knowledge of the members. The appointment of qualified outsiders to take responsibility for certain functions, such as quality control, stock control and finances, was indicated as being helpful when members felt uncertain about their own abilities. This practice supports Abatena's (1997:29) theory that people and communities are capable of helping themselves at grassroots level if the necessary assistance is provided on technical aspects. Thereby, members' capabilities towards self-empowerment and independence stand a better chance of being developed.

All the respondents felt that members should be co-responsible for the financial aspects of projects. Some related the benefits of dividing duties between task groups, but said that all members must be encouraged to make proposals about funding and possible sources of income.

All the groups made it clear that they considered it an essential responsibility of members to be fully informed about the finances of their projects. In this regard Weyers (2001:131) points out that, due to the high rate of unemployment in the country, income-generating projects usually form part of community development projects and that money management should be covered as part of a community education model.

On the subject of the recruitment of new members, one respondent referred to the value of having regular meetings where membership and selection procedures can also be discussed. Others felt that

“new members are selected on account of their skills and knowledge and the contribution they can make to the project”

Abatena (1997:29) explains that problem solving becomes more meaningful and productive when dealing with disputes and disagreements that crop up in projects, if all those concerned participate in finding solutions, thereby also helping to avoid future conflicts.

The majority of respondents who acknowledged that they encounter problems in their projects felt that problems must be dealt with openly by members of the project.

Some respondents emphasised the importance of having clear rules including codes of conduct, which all members must decide on and subscribe to, to determine how issues, including problems, are dealt with. One respondent said that

“it is best to have written-out lists of rules as well as everyone’s responsibilities and duties and to have these openly displayed”

In the discussion about their views on leadership issues, all groups, particularly those with larger memberships, indicated the necessity of having regular, e.g. annual, general meetings to elect leadership positions such as a board and committees.

In this regard, it was said that

“To have a constitution and rules is essential for a project to function properly”

The focus group respondents were all in agreement about the importance of leadership in their projects, which supports the well-documented views on

leadership roles in community work and group work by authors such as Homan (1994:293-294), who describes the needs for leadership and leadership development in projects, Dimock (1987), who expounds the functions and characteristics of leaders and Weyers (2001), who refers to the development of leadership as an essential part of skills development in community development and community work.

5.3.2 Training and development

It was very obvious that the participants in all five focus groups were highly enthusiastic about training and development. The proverbial 'hunger' for knowledge and learning manifested itself in relation to all questions in this section.

Types of training

Training and development are further elements regarded as of major importance for successful social development projects.

An abridged format of the views of respondents on *types* of training is presented in a checklist matrix (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 105) in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Summary of views on types of training

Types of training	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
'How-to' training	Important and sufficient time required	Important & to be fully proficient takes 4-5 weeks	Very important for gardening and child care projects	Very important for skills training	Essential for task training to do work of project
Extension training	Necessary for new ideas and improving and extending product ranges	In demand by members to advance their knowledge	Found to be very beneficial	Considered as essential and stimulating	Considered as necessary to improve and learn new methods
Marketing skills	Important and necessary for promoting project	Necessary. Specially designated person/group can be used	Necessary. Want it for the project	Want to learn about the planning of marketing events	Interested. Considered as necessary
Financial knowledge	Considered as helpful. Outside person handles project finances	It is a need. Included in some courses. Required to understand financial reports	Experienced finance courses difficult but helpful. Contributed to feeling empowered.	Very important. Financial duties can be divided amongst members	Very important to receive training. Need a finance committee
Management	Uncertain about the necessity of it for small groups	Necessary to divide work and make members co-responsible for project work	Necessary to learn additional people skills	Need project management knowledge and to identify training needs of members	Considered as important for project
Leadership	Not aware of existence of such courses	Necessary to decide on division of work/ duties between members	Required for the continuation of the project. Strongly support the concept	Need it for successful continuation of project	Consider it as very important

To expand on the abbreviated information on the respondents' views and experiences relating to different types of training displayed in table 5.3, the responses captured in the focus groups will be described further.

Learning how to do the work of the project was described by respondents with remarks such as

“very important to get basic skills training”

“absolutely necessary”

“essential to have the know-how to do the work”

“essential to learn the work of the project in this way”

According to the respondents, the basic initial task training courses at some projects take six weeks, while others have a four to five week initial training requirement. The respondents reckoned that basic training is the way to enter into a project.

The respondents felt strongly that prospective members should receive suitable training before they start working on a project and in that way become capable and prepared for the work expected of them. This view supports the enabling function of training and development, which is considered by Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001:50) as being central to successful projects.

The respondents were also in full agreement about continued training to learn new and different methods to improve their work. It was said

“members want it, although not all have had the opportunity to undergo further training”

Those who have received further and advanced training consider it

“essential as it serves to stimulate an interest in and commitment for the project”

Some commented that

“we used to do things the old way, now we know much better, because we know so much more”

A respondent involved in childcare observed as follows

“I’m fascinated by the childcare training I’ve been getting and find it very meaningful that I now know how to deal with the parents and how to help them deal with and understand their children better”

Most respondents pointed out that, with continued training, they expand their knowledge and skills, which they considered necessary to ensure that the work they do or articles they produce are of a high and professional standard. They felt that, in this way, members develop pride in their work.

This view corresponds with the experiences of the Ms Foundation for Women, whose products are sold in upmarket boutiques and are of high quality and standards of workmanship as a result of the specialised training received by the women (Wadia and Colón, 2000).

Other types of training discussed dealt with learning marketing skills, which was regarded as vital by all the respondents.

Most respondents expressed a need for know-how about marketing, especially on how to make their projects and products known in different communities. Some indicated that they would like to receive training on how to effectively plan their marketing efforts.

The concepts and activities of marketing as a practice model in community work are extensively described by Weyers (2001:192-217), who provides a detailed guide for practitioners in the field. Homan (1994:256-280) also gives practical details of the why and how of marketing functions and techniques in community work projects.

Some respondents in one of the groups felt that this was a specialised function that should be handled by a specially designated group or person.

Another group, whose members provide a wide variety of high quality craft and gift products with the assistance of strong outside mentor involvement,

also expressed an interest in learning about certain aspects of marketing, such as product ranges and market segmentation, as a way of becoming more independent.

A successful garden project member exclaimed

“we consider marketing knowledge necessary and would like to learn about it. We need it, but how?”

Kabeer (1999:42) points out in her paper on the indicators of women's empowerment that women who are involved in their own income-generating activities showed significantly higher success rates in development and empowerment measures.

As the groups in the study all represented social development projects for which economic development is crucial, knowledge about financial matters are therefore important considerations for the success of the projects.

All the respondents expressed a keen interest in learning about financial matters and money management.

Significantly all the respondents viewed knowledge about budgeting as essential for both themselves and for their projects. They indicated different ways in which they had benefited personally and all felt that training in money management was essential.

Some of the most explicit and meaningful remarks to this effect were

“the course we have done in managing money was very difficult, but it has been most helpful. Now we know about money. We can also save now. We really feel empowered by the knowledge we have about finances”.

Generally, the respondents felt that all initial courses should include basic financial management sections. They consider it particularly beneficial to learn about the financial aspects that relate to the project activities, as it creates a more businesslike approach amongst members right from the beginning.

All the respondents viewed it as important for members of projects to understand how the finances of their projects are managed. Although not all are directly involved, they felt that members should be able to fully understand the financial reports.

These remarks confirm the views of Weyers (2001:99) namely that learning about financial management should be an inherent part of skills training and education practices in community work.

Some respondents felt that a finance committee and a capable and knowledgeable outside person should deal with the project finances.

Most respondents expressed an interest in and considered it advisable that training should be available for members to develop their management and leadership skills. They were of the opinion that these skills were needed to ensure the continuation of projects and their future success.

Discussing other types of training, some respondents were specific about the need for knowledge about project management and indicated that they would like to see opportunities for members to have the chance to learn about business plans, target dates, sub-projects, deadlines and related concepts.

Positive comments were made about business skills development courses they had attended as being particularly valuable for providing members with insight into how their activities fit into the wider context of their projects.

Additional training needs expressed by some members, included courses in computer literacy skills, driving lessons, courses in home nursing care and in basic social work skills.

Discussing the community education model, Weyers (2001:162-190) provides useful and clear guidelines for identifying a wide variety of educational and training needs and steps to take with the aim of improving knowledge and skills levels.

Methods of training

In line with what Miles and Huberman (1994:105) refer to as 'major themes' of importance, training, and therefore different methods of training, are elements that are also regarded as 'must haves' for success in social development projects.

The findings relating to how the respondents felt about different *methods* of training are preceded by an abridged format in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Summary of views on methods of training

Methods of training	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
On-the-job training	Prefer work to be demonstrated in relevant environment	Considered as necessary for all members to become acquainted with work	Considered as essential for learning to start with the work of the project	Prefer demonstrations in own environment as a practical and applicable method	Own environment better and important for easy understanding; Also convenient to use own equipment and to cut out travel costs
Lectures in classroom situation	Suitable for certain types of training	Better for certain types of additional training, which must be completed in specific period of time	Not considered as ideal	Less popular with members	It's good if suitable and appropriate equipment is available
Learning in groups	In demand by members who also learn from one another	Considered as good for team-building purposes	Considered as the best and the preferred method	Members like to learn in small groups for the personal contact and interaction it provides	The preferred method. They support one another by sharing and find it better for retention of knowledge
Visiting other projects	A good idea; considered as valuable experience	Found it stimulating, educational and very encouraging	Have found it very useful, learning a lot in a very practical way	Found it very helpful because it stimulated new ideas for the project	Want to do it to learn from what other projects are doing and to benefit from their experience

As shown in Table 5.4, when discussing the different methods of training the participants were unanimous in their support for on-the-job training with accompanying demonstrations on the different activities of the project. All felt it was more beneficial to learn your job at the place where you have to do it. They believed it more appropriate for the assimilation of information and felt that it contributes towards a better understanding of individual tasks, roles and responsibilities. It was said that

“demonstrations in our own environment is necessary in order to make it more applicable and practical for members”

To train in groups was the preferred method of all respondents, also when they attend courses elsewhere. It was said that it is popular among members for various reasons. Some of the reasons given were that

“members can also learn from one another and they find it more stimulating”

“members like it because it also helps with building team spirit amongst members”

“we like learning in teams because we can assist and support one another”

“It’s nice! (dis lekker)”

“we prefer smaller groups because it’s less stressful to acknowledge our ignorance and more conducive for interaction amongst members and we can also learn from one another”

To visit other projects as a learning experience has been successfully demonstrated by some of the Flagship Programmes of the Department of Social Development (2000), such as the Northern Cape Fraserburg Project whose activities were failing but which revived after its members visited a successful project.

Critchley (1999:49) identified visiting successful projects as inspirational for East African farm project members and as worthwhile learning opportunities.

The success of the Kenyan Women’s group described by Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001: 51) was directly related to exposure of the women to field days and training camps.

All the respondents in the focus groups viewed visits to other projects, programmes and events as very popular educational experiences among their members for the value it adds in broadening their knowledge and insights.

Most respondents had been part of 'delegations' to other projects. They found it

“very useful and inspirational”

to see and hear what others in similar circumstances have achieved and to exchange ideas and views with people in the same position as them. Some respondents said they also considered it helpful because

“they can steal new ideas with their eyes and ears”

Respondents who belong to projects whose members regularly go on such learning visits describe it as

“stimulating to see other and different activities and to be in a position to weigh up possibilities to incorporate new ways in our own projects”

“it is also quite encouraging to see what other projects can achieve with limited resources”

Respondents who belong to a garden project described how they found it particularly inspiring when they visited a bigger garden project than theirs as, by seeing much bigger and better vegetables than their own being grown, they could learn in a very practical way how to increase and improve their own crops.

Participants who had not been on such learning trips to other projects, viewed it as a deficiency in their learning and felt a need to broaden their knowledge, particularly about product ranges.

The idea of training by attending lectures in a classroom situation was reported by most respondents as not popular with members. They commented that “it mustn’t be lectures only”. However, some respondents acknowledged that it could have some value as

***“it can foster trust in members to be sent for such courses”
“it is a better method for certain types of training, especially
if note-taking is required, which is often very difficult at our
workplaces”***

In view of the positive responses to different aspects of learning and training, it was clear that the focus groups considered knowledge as an important building block for empowering women in social development projects.

This view has been amply promoted by writers in the field of development and community work, such as Weyers (2001:162) describing education as “to eliminate the disempowering effect of ignorance”. Bergdall (2000: 194), when writing about projects that promote self-reliant participatory development in rural communities, refers to the “strong link between power and knowledge” and demonstrates how, by utilising a bottom-up approach in development projects, learning experiences lead to empowering all stakeholders.

5.3.3 Women’s groups and networks

Women’s groups, groupings, organisations and networks that promote common interests can be regarded as important elements for successful social development projects for women.

The value derived from belonging to women’s groups has been spelled out by Rowlands (1998: 29), who refers to them as ‘allies’ for women’s development. Their non-financial benefits, such as access to resources, providing networking opportunities, offering personal support by assisting members with knowledge and access to development opportunities, make them a special resource.

Various women's organisations have proved to be particularly beneficial to women in social development projects.

Some of these have been reported on by Tripp (1994) and Thomas-Slayter and Sodikoff (2001:52), who describe the Women in Agricultural Development Project (WIADP) in Malawi as being distinctly beneficial to women, who form farm clubs to gain access to credit, knowledge and funding. These authors consider belonging to such organisations and groups as important indicators for successful development projects.

All respondents in the focus groups expressed positive views on belonging to women's groups. Their views were made clear by remarks such as

“belonging to clubs and groups offer a supportive environment – to be with other women with similar interests”

“women's groups offer opportunities to grow and develop”

“they create feelings of cohesiveness for members”

“ Belonging to organisations can help to get wider support for our ideas and what we are doing”

Referring to the empowering value of women's' groups, a respondent expressed her feelings by saying that

“it is a good idea for women to work together, that way we learn that we can do things by ourselves and we are strong and we can – and we mustn't be afraid”

“it helps to build one's self-esteem”

“it is empowering to be a member of a bigger organisation”

Many respondents also referred to the practical benefits that organisations for women can offer their members:

“It provides learning opportunities”

“It is a good thing for women to belong to organisations as they can get information on available services”

“They can share materials and benefits like facilities and equipment with other groups”

All respondents saw value in women's organisations in terms of the learning opportunities and the support from others with the same interests, thereby helping to build self-esteem and feelings of empowerment.

Two of the focus groups indicated that an organisation or forum for dealing with the interests of social development projects such as theirs would be a good idea, not only for sharing knowledge, but also materials and benefits.

These sentiments bear out the findings of Tripp (1994:112-113) on the ways in which various women's organisations, such as church groups, saving associations and business organisations, provide training and other assistance to start income-generating projects for poor women. It was found that the main motivation for these alliances was “economic survival and mutual support – to share contacts, exchange business and other ideas, provide financial assistance” for starting projects (Tripp, 1994:119).

Building networks for collaboration between different organs of the state and parastatals has proved beneficial in supporting social development programmes, such as the Flagship Programmes of the Department of Social Development (2000), and is of particular relevance to social development projects at local level.

As far as the potential for networks and collaboration with official bodies and organisations is concerned, the Integrated Development Plans (IDP) framework provides a manual for local governments to guide their activities

relating to social development initiatives in their areas (Cole and Parnell, 2000).

The developmental function of local government, as described in the IDPs, therefore potentially could be an important supporting network vehicle for social development projects for women.

When dealing with the questions relating to cooperation and networking with official bodies, all the respondents in the focus groups felt that local councils should take an interest in and be involved in social development projects in their areas.

Some of the views expressed were:

“local councils have a responsibility towards developments in their areas and they can provide useful networks with other organisations and service providers”

“they should provide help by means of assisting with resources and facilities”

“projects can’t exist in isolation, council must be aware of our existence and what we do”

Other respondents expressed opinions on the practical ways in which councils could be supporting their efforts by remarking that

“they can be supportive by being lenient with service charges”

“they can assist with cleaning up around our project”

“they can assist with providing infrastructure and facilities for some of our activities”

In the majority of projects, it appears that the experiences of the women support the findings of Cole and Parnell (2000:45), who reported on the

disappointing way in which local councils implemented the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) in terms of gender and poverty programmes.

The following remarks by the respondents bear out this perception:

“it is very important that local councils should take an interest in and be involved as they have funding and resources which could be utilised to assist projects like ours, but councils are however found to be lax and don’t seem to be interested”.

Two of the focus groups referred to their involvement with the councils in their areas. One group experienced satisfactory cooperation and interest by means of resources being made available and by having the project’s funding managed by the council. The council was also taking an interest in and supporting their activities and helping to develop new activities.

The other group had good cooperation from their local council, which assisted by helping the project to obtain additional land to extend their garden project activities.

Another type of involvement with government departments had been to attend training courses offered by various departments.

All the groups experienced official involvement only on a limited level, namely with the Department of Social Services for the funding of training.

One of the projects had close cooperation with a medical school, being part of a research project for which funding from an international donor was obtained. This also makes provision for the services of a mentor, who provides invaluable help with product design and marketing services.

5.3.4 Innovation

In view of the dynamic nature of social development projects and their unique reliance on people's commitment, innovation was identified as an important criterion for successful programmes.

Critchley (1999) described various forms of innovation applied by farmers in East African development projects, coming to the conclusion that travelling to other areas and seeing other successful projects, as well as receiving additional training, are significant sources of inspiration for new ideas.

When discussing the concept of new ideas in the focus groups, all the respondents felt that new ideas are very necessary and can even determine a project's survival.

Perrin (2000:1-6) refers to innovation as "novel ways of doing things better or different" and cautions that patience is needed and that initial failures sometimes turn into unexpected successes. Time and patience to learn new and different ways of doing things are important in order to find improvements.

The respondents in the focus groups expressed a marked interest in the concept of innovation and were of the opinion that new ideas are needed to extend product ranges, but also to keep the work interesting.

It was stated explicitly that

"we need new ideas otherwise the work becomes too boring"

"we are interested in and we want change, we find that new ideas are stimulating to everybody."

Linking innovation to the motivational value of training and the stimulation that new knowledge provides, some respondents described the need for innovation in their projects in the following ways:

“It’s very necessary for project members to get new ideas to be able to extend our product ranges”

“new ideas is stimulating everybody”

“new ideas make the work more interesting to carry on with”.

One of the groups demonstrated their enthusiasm for new ideas by telling about the new products that they were already working on for the Christmas season, although it was only May.

All the focus groups indicated that they consider visits to other projects and events, such as shows and exhibitions, as the best stimulus for developing new ideas. This supports the findings of Critchley (1999).

Second best for generating ideas was training and particularly extended training on new products and the improvement of existing products.

Other opinions expressed for generating new ideas were reading specialist journals and listening to related radio programmes. Involvement in other organisations and bodies was also said to provide opportunities for extending one’s own ideas.

5.3.5 Empowerment

The discussion on empowerment and their feelings about personal changes that they had experienced since becoming involved in the projects elicited the most enthusiastic responses from respondents in all the sessions.

They all seemed to like being able to reflect on their own feelings and emotions.

The dimensions of empowerment experienced by women in development programmes, as described inter alia by Kabeer (1999), Mosse (1993), Rowlands (1998) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, 2000), appeared to have been experienced by all the women in the focus groups.

The way in which respondents expressed their feelings concurred with the views of Rowlands (1998:23), who describes empowerment experiences as being both personal and collective. In all the focus groups, the respondents alternatively referred to their experiences in the singular and in the plural by statements such as

“we can stand on our own feet now”

“we find it much easier to express opinions now”

“we have also learnt to trust one another as we got to know everybody better”

“we feel nothing can stop us!”

Kabeer (1999:3) refers to empowerment as a result of changes experienced on different levels by women in development programmes. Some of the changes refer to the way in which they experience having choices, while others refer to the concept of ‘agency’, which is described as “the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them”.

The respondents described the changes they had experienced since joining the projects by statements such as the following:

“I feel positive about myself for what I have learned and experienced, I feel enthusiastic and I want to learn more”

“I feel proud about what I feel I have achieved and about the courage I’ve shown to persevere and that I’ve even been able to talk on a television programme”

“I was very unsure of myself, now I feel more confident and I realise I can also make a difference in other people’s lives”

“I consider this a growth process and want to continue growing”

“I have been able to discover my own potential and feel good about myself. I have also become much more involved in different other things as well – my life is fuller ”

“I was very depressed and sad, now I can sleep well, I am happy, I feel much better about myself”

“We feel free now – we know what we are going to do tomorrow”

“Since becoming involved in this project my family has also become affected and involved, which is very satisfying”

“not knowing initially what it would be like, I have learned a lot about myself and about other people and think I developed more people skills and that I am worth something for other people too”

“initially I was quite scared and nervous, now I feel free. I feel that I can be more outspoken now, while I was too scared before to speak my mind when in a group”

Having a sense of dignity was identified by Rowlands (1998:23-24) as an element of both personal and collective empowerment and considered to be the “core of empowerment”. It is understood to refer to having self-respect, honour and a sense of self-worth, and having a “right to receive respect from others”.

The reactions of the respondents endorsed this view in the way in which they described how they are perceived in their communities:

“we are respected as women for what we have achieved, we are more respected now than before”

“Everyone around here is excited by what we do and what we have achieved, when we have a problem they come and offer help”

“The community show respect for what we do and support us”

These expressions of positive self-perception and the messages they send of self held images, referred to by Bergdall (2000), could be seen as the results of how they view their own development and empowerment. They also support the view presented by the United Nations Development Fund for Women in their guidelines on women’s empowerment, namely for women to develop a sense of self-worth, a belief in one’s ability to secure desired changes is important (Unifem, 2000).

5.3.6 Advice to prospective groups

The focus groups were asked whether they had any advice for prospective social development groups based on their experiences. The respondents offered a variety of what could be considered useful hints for prospective groups.

Their advice dealt with aspects such as leadership, training and development, quality of work, personal qualities and team work.

All the respondents showed a positive attitude about such projects and expressed views supporting the idea of starting and running social development projects, with remarks such as

“Unite by standing together and to get more power that way”

“Support one another”, “Work together – and believe in your own abilities”

“Just persevere with what you start off with. Keep going – don’t give up”

“Self-talk is very important to keep you going”

“Ensure that your products are of a high quality and that you have good and attractive packaging”

“Visit other projects”

“Good teamwork is very important”

“Trust yourself”

“A good structure for the project is needed to divide duties and responsibilities”

“Make sure you have good leadership”

“You need people who can persevere; don’t give up easily, vasbyt!”

“It is better to start off with new members than to try and revive an old organisation”

“Be prepared to learn”

“Training is essential and should continue, obtain as much knowledge as possible, also about business skills”

“Products must be original and of good quality”

“Prepare a handbook for members”

“The group must learn to work together, they are dependent on one another for the success of the project”

Judging by these remarks, which ended the focus group discussions, a clear picture emerged, namely one of women who feel good about themselves for what they know and have achieved.

5.4 Conclusion

The research findings contained in this chapter reflect the views of women who have been involved in social development projects. By applying an explorative and descriptive design and a qualitative approach for the study, their personal responses and descriptions of situations and experiences could be captured.

A clear picture emerged of women who generally feel good about themselves for what they know and have achieved.

Their opinions on the elements considered as criteria that can contribute to success in social development projects based on their experiences, provide valuable first-hand information for implementing and sustaining such programmes.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The political changes in South Africa have had profound effects on the fields of social work and social welfare.

New policies and legislation have forced the review and change of outdated, irrelevant and often inappropriate practices. The realities of the demographics of the country and the extent of the poverty and deprivation suffered by the majority of the population have starkly highlighted areas previously neglected by the so-called caring professions.

The focus on development, accepting economic development as an intrinsic part thereof, has become the underlying principle for the transformation of social services.

This principle has found expression in government policies, resulting in legislation and regulations at national, provincial and local levels, which have impacted significantly on the fields of welfare and social work.

Accepting and integrating the social development approach have proved to be a considerable challenge to institutions, organisations and practitioners, because of the changes required in their practices, methods, behaviour and attitudes.

The driving force for this study has been to develop an understanding of the concept of social development and how to integrate it into the discipline of social work in order to ensure its continued relevance in the new dispensation.

Women account for more than half of the South African population and, as a result of their being excluded and marginalised in many respects, constitute the majority of the 'underdeveloped' sector of the population. For this reason, women formed the main focus for the study.

The study was undertaken with one aim and three objectives.

The aim was to present guidelines for organisations and practitioners in the fields of social welfare, social work and social development, when implementing and managing programmes aimed at the social development and welfare of women.

The **first** objective to achieve this aim was to describe the nature and dimensions of the empowerment of women from a social development perspective.

The **second** objective was to identify criteria considered as good practice for improving the chances of success when implementing development programmes aimed at women.

The **third** objective was to describe the experiences of women involved in five Western Cape projects in terms of these criteria.

Thus, the objectives were meant to explore and explain the 'what, why and how' of social development involving women.

The first objective was dealt with in chapters two and three. This covered information on and descriptions of the background, concepts, dimensions and elements of social development in chapter two. In chapter three, information was presented on the South African policies and structures aimed at social development and welfare.

Chapter four covered the application of good practices in social development that have been identified as criteria for success in programmes and projects around the world.

Chapter five described the perspectives and views, based on their experiences, of members of five Western Cape social development projects in terms of the criteria identified as good practice models.

Often referred to as 'elusive concepts', empowerment and social development have been found to have logical applications and to offer potentially practical opportunities for social work interventions.

Resulting from these observations, the researcher has come to certain conclusions and will make recommendations in this regard.

6.2 Conclusions based on the findings of the study

The following conclusions are based on the findings of the research.

6.2.1 *Concepts and dimensions of social development*

- ❖ Social development and empowerment are not a domain dominated by one discipline or methodology, but ideally should have a multi-disciplinary approach. The literature review provided not only useful clues to the 'what and why' questions of these concepts, but also insight into the associated fields and disciplines.
- ❖ Development is a process and not a 'quick-fix' for needy individuals, groups and communities. Understanding this leads to an understanding of the importance of thorough planning, monitoring and evaluation. If those involved in development projects accept

accountability, it will lead to a sense of ownership and commitment as well as to realistic views on successes **and** failures.

- ❖ In the field of social development, willingness to learn in new and different ways, to act in new and different ways, and also the willingness to unlearn, can add to building capacity, skills and knowledge. The lack of capacity and expertise experienced in many fields has a lot to do with personal behaviour and attitudes.
- ❖ Another conclusion about the lack of capacity phenomenon was that it could be addressed by community network skills by pooling resources of different role-players working together in programmes, exchanging knowledge and expertise and thereby also learning from one another.
- ❖ Empowerment, implying change and focusing on the strength perspective in social work, was found to be both a goal and a result of development processes, although initially it might not be viewed as a goal by those instituting the programmes.
- ❖ Individuals and groups become empowered by their participation in social development activities. This was confirmed by the findings of the empirical research as all the focus groups reported strong feelings of being empowered as a result of working as teams in the projects.
- ❖ Earning an income contributes considerably to women becoming empowered. The fact that the focus groups in the fieldwork research all represented social development projects with income-generating goals, bears out this finding described in the literature review.
- ❖ Personal empowerment leads to feeling happier and having more confidence in oneself and also manifests positively in personal relationships. The participants in the focus groups confirmed this, supporting the views found in the literature.

- ❖ Empowerment, described as a process of personal growth for individuals as well as groups, is possible in most projects, provided that technical help, when required, is made available to ensure that projects do not fail due to a lack of special skills and expertise.

6.2.2 South African policies, structures and institutions for social development

- ❖ The new policies adopted by government, which indicate social development as the preferred method to address underdevelopment in the country, have meant a drastic break with previous procedures and have caught many welfare institutions and practitioners off-guard and unprepared for what is expected of them.
- ❖ It appears that little consultation and cooperation took place between government and practitioners in the planning and implementation of the new policies, because of an apparent lack of mutual trust, understanding and support.
- ❖ A widening chasm between policy makers and practitioners is indicated, which can be blamed on a lack of preparedness of the social work profession to implement the social development approach. Indications of alienation have been expressed by both sides, showing disagreement and signs of marginalisation.
- ❖ The fact that local government has a constitutional obligation in respect of development and women indicates its potential as a strong ally for organisations and projects at local level. Unfortunately, this role has not been realised. Very limited support for and involvement in local social development initiatives have been found.

- ❖ None of the different roles pointed out for social workers utilising the social development approach, seemed to have been realised meaningfully, which may be due to a lack of developmental organisational structures.
- ❖ The apparent lack of interest and involvement in implementing the strengths and asset-based community development models by social workers is hard to explain. It is acknowledged that their qualifications equip them with suitable knowledge and skills to be effective in the development field.
- ❖ Most welfare organisations appear not to have been able to transform according to expectations into 'organisations for social development'. Their apparent resistance to change has kept them out of not only favour, but also significant financial support from government and other funders.

6.2.3 *Good practice experiences*

- ❖ The participants in the focus groups in the empirical study proved the criteria identified and described in good practice examples from many parts of the world, as being equally important as success factors to deal with the 'how' of social development.
- ❖ That the participation of members in social development projects utilising bottom-up approaches contributes to the success of projects can be concluded from the research findings. Training and development are equally vital elements for success and the utilisation of different types and methods of training can make a significant difference to members' experiences. The value of belonging to groups or organisations provided valuable support and learning mechanisms, while the concept of innovation as being necessary for the success of

projects was borne out by the high value ascribed to it by the focus group participants.

- ❖ Projects with supporting structures such as interested funders, officials, or mentors as sources of 'technical' outside assistance, develop faster and stand a better chance of being successful.

6.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the conclusions reached.

6.3.1 *Projects*

It is recommended that:

- ❖ When social development projects are planned and implemented, the elements identified as criteria for success in the study, namely participation, groups, training and innovation, should be used as guidelines.
- ❖ The elements identified as criteria for successful projects in the study, namely participation, groups, training and innovation, should be included in planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures and practices of social development projects.
- ❖ Social development projects for women should be established in deprived areas on a participatory basis, with the members themselves identifying strengths, assets, needs and how to address them. This will also provide learning opportunities and experience for practitioners delivering community services.

6.3.2 *Social workers*

It is recommended that:

- ❖ Social workers and senior social work students should be given opportunities to learn the techniques of facilitation, mediation, networking, marketing and communication, as well as project management, from knowledgeable specialist presenters in order to be comfortable to apply these techniques in utilising the social development approach in practice.

6.3.3 *Universities*

It is recommended that:

- ❖ As part of their practical work social work students should also be placed in development programmes and projects run by informal community organisations, self-help groups, NGOs, entrepreneurs and government and other institutions, to enable them to identify and gain experience in non-therapeutic developmental practices and roles.
- ❖ Schools of social work, in conjunction with other university faculties and departments such as medicine, business science, agriculture, law and home economics, should undertake social development projects on a combined level to give students exposure to intersectoral cooperation by utilising different disciplines to achieve development objectives.

6.3.4 *Welfare organisations*

It is recommended that:

- ❖ Welfare organisations should form working relationships and partnerships with the sectors responsible for development in government departments such as Water Affairs and Forestry,

Agriculture and Land Affairs, Environmental Affairs and Tourism and Trade and Industry, as well as with the local and district councils of their areas, to establish local social development projects. Such combined projects will benefit poor communities, improve service delivery, contribute to better accountability, help improve the image of organisations and stand a better change of receiving funding.

- ❖ Welfare organisations and social workers should establish social development projects attached to existing government structures, such as MPCCs (Multipurpose Community Centres, run by the Department of Government Communication and Information Services), to build credibility and encourage cooperation at local levels between government and welfare structures and practitioners.
- ❖ Combined project teams to address specific problem areas at different levels, should be established between the Department of Social Development and social work structures and practitioners as a way to start building mutual understanding and trust.

6.4 Further research

The following research is recommended:

- ❖ Participatory action research projects should be instituted by training institutions, government and research bodies as a preferred alternative research methodology in respect of social development projects utilising the asset-based approach to establish not only needs, but particularly strengths and resources, to build capacity at grassroots level.
- ❖ A study to establish the feasibility and best structure of a national organisation for social development projects.
- ❖ A study to compile a practical guide for establishing and running social development projects in South Africa.

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ANNEXURE A

Questions for focus groups

- Introductions
 - Who I am
 - Purpose of session & how information will be used. Also other groups.
 - This is a thinking and talking session.
I will ask questions on how you think and feel about ["name of project"]
How you experience it. What it means to you as a person.
What *you* think, as everybody's opinion is important.
 - When I write about these discussions, no names or names of projects will be used, so nobody will know from whom or where I got the information.
[check for understanding]
 - To start off, can we please go around the table telling what you enjoy doing most when you're not working at "name of project"
 - I'm going to ask you questions about how you experience belonging to "name of project".
1. For projects like "name of project", what do you think are important ways to get all the members to work together?
 2. What would you say, how much say/involvement should members have in the following matters of the project:
 - 2.1 Planning of work and projects
 - 2.2 Allocation/division of tasks
 - 2.3 How to get funding/money in for the work of the project
 - 2.4 How to get new/more members
 - 2.5 How to deal with problems
 - 2.6 Deciding on leadership
 - 2.7 Any other issues

3. Now I would like to hear your opinions about training. Please tell me what you think about the following types of training and how important you consider it to be

- 3.1 'How-to' training which one needs to do the work for the project (eg. gardening, sewing, making things)
- 3.2 Training to learn new and different methods to improve on the work you do
- 3.3 Learning how to make your project and your work known and to let people know about what you do and what you sell (marketing)
- 3.4 Learning how to work with money, how to plan and budget, how to invest for oneself and for the project
- 3.5 Learning about working in teams and about dividing duties between the members (management)
- 3.6 Training to learn about taking responsibility, to organise, to plan ahead (leadership)
- 3.7 Any other type of training

4. There are *different ways* in which a person can learn. What is your opinion about the the following ways of learning and give me reasons for your answers please

- 4.1 On-the-job training with somebody showing and demonstrating
- 4.2 Receiving lectures like in a classroom
- 4.3 Learning and working in groups with everybody participating
- 4.4 Visits to other places or projects where one can see, hear and learn
- 4.5 Any other way of learning

5. Now, I would be interested to hear what you think, in general, about women's groups such as clubs and women's organisations.

5.1 What value, if any, do you think does it have for women to belong to or be involved in organisations like clubs or groups?

6. Next, I would be interested to hear your views on the involvement of official bodies like the local council, government departments or other bodies, with projects like "name of project"

6.1 In what ways do you think official bodies like local councils, government departments or other similar bodies can be involved

6.2 Does "name of project" have any co-operation with such official bodies and if so, what does it involve?

7. The next question is about ideas – ideas that are new and different

7.1 Please tell me, how do you feel about new ideas for projects

7.2 How can members be helped to get new ideas?

8. For the last section, I want you to take a few seconds to think back to when you first became involved in "name of project" and how you felt about yourself then.

8.1 Would you say that you feel differently about yourself now? If so, in what ways/how do you feel different?

8.2 What about respect? Do you think you as a person or you as a group have gained respect?

8.3 How easy or how difficult is it for you to say what you think and do things on your own and to take decisions?

9. So, coming to the end of the session, if you could give advice to other women who want to start projects, what would you say to them?

- I can briefly summarise what we covered in the discussion,
- Do you agree.....?.
- Thank you

Vrae vir fokusgroepe

- Bekendstellings
- Wie ek is
- Doel van sessie & hoe inligting gebruik gaan word. Daar is ook ander groepe
- Hierdie is 'n dink-en-praat sessie
Ek sal vrae vra oor wat julle dink en voel oor [naam van projek];
wat elkeen van julle dink, want elkeen se mening is belangrik.
- Wanneer ek hieroor gaan skryf, sal niemand se naam of selfs die projek se naam genoem word nie. So niemand sal weet waar en van wie ek die inligting gekry het nie.
[Almal verstaan?]
- Om mee te begin, kan ons om die tafel gaan en elkeen sê wat jy die meeste geniet om te doen wanneer jy nié by [naam van projek] werk nie.
- Ek gaan nou vir julle vrae vra oor julle ervaring as lede van [naam van projek]

1. Wat dink julle is belangrik om mense te laat saam werk in 'n projek soos [naam van projek]?

2. Hoe dink julle, hoeveel sê moet lede hê of hoe betrokke moet lede wees by die volgende sake van die projek

2.1 Beplanning van werk/projekte

2.2 Verdeling/toedeling van werk

2.3 Hoe om geld/fondse in te kry vir die projek

2.4 Hoe om nuwe/meer lede te werf

2.5 Hoe om probleme te hanteer

2.6 Om oor leierskap te besluit

2.7 Enige ander sake?

3. Nou wil ek graag jul mening oor opleiding hoor. Sê my, wat dink julle van die volgende tipes van opleiding en hoe belangrik dink julle is dit?

3.1 Opleiding wat mens leer om die werk van die projek te doen (bv. naaldwerk, tuinbou, artikels maak)

3.2 Opleiding wat jou leer om die werk beter of anders te doen

3.3 Opleiding om te leer hoe om die projek en die werk wyer bekend te stel sodat meer mense kan weet van die projek en die werk wat gedoen en wat verkoop word (bemarking)

3.4 Om te leer hoe om met geld te werk en hoe om vooruit te beplan oor hoeveel geld nodig gaan wees en hoe om dit te kry (begrotings) en hoe om met jou eie en die projek se geld te belê

3.5 Om te leer hoe om in spanne te werk en hoe werk tussen lede verdeel word (bestuur)

3.6 Om te leer hoe om verantwoordelikheid te neem, om te organiseer en vooruit te beplan (leierskap)

3.7 Enige ander tipe opleiding

4. Mense leer op *verskillende maniere*. Wat is jul mening oor die volgende maniere waarop mens kan leer en waarom dink julle so?

4.1 Op die plek waar jy werk, deur iemand wat jou wys hoe die werk gedoen moet word

4.2 Weg van die werkplek, soos in 'n klaskamer, waar iemand jou vertel hoe die werk gedoen moet word

4.3 Om in 'n groep te leer waar almal saam werk

4.4 Om te leer deur ander plekke en projekte te besoek om te sien en te hoor hoe ander mense te werk gaan

4.5 Enige ander maniere

5. Nou sal ek graag wil hoor wat julle in die algemeen dink van vrouegroepe soos klubs en vroue organisasies.

5.1 Wat dink julle is die waarde, indien enige vir iemand om te behoort aan vrouegroepe en organisasies?

6. Volgende sal ek graag jul mening wil hoor oor die betrokkenheid van amptelike liggame soos die munisipaliteit en staatsdepartemente of ander liggame by projekte soos [naam van projek

6.1 Op watter maniere dink julle kan amptelike liggame soos die munisipaliteit, staatsdepartemente of soortgelyke liggame betrokke wees by projekte?

6.2 Bestaan daar enige samewerking/betrokkenheid tussen [naam van projek] en enige amptelike liggaam en wat behels dit?

7. My volgende vraag gaan oor idees – idees wat nuut en anders is

7.1 Wat is jul mening/hoe voel julle oor nuwe idees vir projekte?

7.2 Hoe dink julle kan lede gehelp word om nuwe idees vir 'n projek te kry?

8. Ons is nou naby die einde en ek wil elkeen van julle vra om terug te dink aan die tyd toe jy by [naam van projek] betrokke geraak het en hoe jy toe oor jouself gevoel het.

8.1 Sal jy sê dat jy nou anders voel oor jouself? Indien jy nou anders voel, kan jy verduidelik hoe anders jy voel?

8.2 Wat van respek? Sou jy sê jy of julle as groep word ge-respekteer?

8.3 Hoe moeilik of maklik is dit vir julle om te sê wat julle dink en dinge op jul eie te doen en om besluite te neem?

9. Nou dat ons aan die einde van die sessie gekom het, kan julle vir my sê, as julle vir ander vroue wat ook 'n projek wil begin, kon raad gee, wat se raad sou julle vir hulle gee?

- Ek som kortliks op wat in die gesprek gedek is
- Stem julle saam?
- Baie dankie

Annexure B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION/ANSWER GUIDE

Information about focus group

Name of project	
Date of session	
Number of participants	
Location of focus group	

- Introductions
- Who I am
- Purpose of session & how information will be used. Also other groups.

- This is a thinking and talking session.

I will ask questions on how you think and feel about [**"name of project"**]

How you experience it. What it means to you as a person.

What *you* think, as everybody's opinion is important.

- When I write about these discussions, no names or names of projects will be used, so nobody will know from whom or where I got the information. [check for understanding]
- To start off, can we please go around the table telling what you enjoy doing most when you're not working at "**name of project**"

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

1. Now I would like to hear your opinion, for projects like “name of project”, what do you think are important ways to get all the members to work together?

<u>Key responses</u>	<u>Notable quotes</u>

2. What would you say, how much say/involvement should members have in the following matters of the project:

<u>2.1 Planning of work and projects</u>	<u>2.2 Allocation/division of work</u>	<u>2.3 How to get funding/money in for the work of the project</u>

<u>2.4 How to get new/more members</u>	<u>2.5 How to deal with problems</u>	<u>2.6 Deciding on leadership</u>

Any other issues/ Notable quotes

3. Now I would like to hear your opinions about training.**Please tell me what you think about the following types of training and how important you consider it to be**

3.1 <u>'How-to' training which one needs to do the work for the project (eg. gardening, sewing, making things)</u>	3.2 <u>Training to learn new and different methods to improve on the work you do</u>	3.3 <u>Learning how to make your project and your work known and to let people know about what you do and what you sell (marketing)</u>
3.4 <u>Learning how to work with money, how to plan and budget, how to invest for oneself and for the project</u>	3.5 <u>Learning about working in teams and about dividing duties between the members (management)</u>	3.6 <u>Training to learn about taking responsibility, to organise, to plan ahead (leadership)</u>

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Any other type of training & Notable quotes

4. There are *different ways* in which a person can learn. What is your opinion about the the following ways of learning and give me reasons for your answers please

<u>4.1 On-the-job training with somebody showing and demonstrating</u>	<u>4.2 Receiving lectures like in a classroom</u>	<u>4.3 Learning and working in groups with everybody participating</u>

<u>4.4 Visits to other places or projects where one can see, hear and learn</u>	<u>4.5 Any other way of learning</u>	<u>quotes</u>

5. Now, I would be interested to hear what you think, in general, about women's groups such as clubs and women's organisations

5.1 What value, if any, do you think does it have for women to belong to or be involved in organisations like clubs or groups?

6. Next, I would be interested to hear your views on the involvement of official bodies like the local council, government departments or other bodies, with projects like “name of project”

6.1 In what ways do you think official bodies like local councils, government departments or other similar bodies can be involved

6.2 Does “name of project” have any co-operation with such official bodies and if so, what does it involve?

7. The next question is about ideas – ideas that are new and different

7.1 Please tell me, how do you feel about new ideas
for projects

7.2 How can members be helped to get new ideas?

Quotes

8. For the last section, I want you to take a few seconds to think back to when you first became involved in “name of project” and how you felt about yourself then.

<p><u>8.1 Would you say that you feel differently about yourself now? If so, in what ways/how do you feel different?</u></p>	<p><u>8.2 What about respect? Do you think you as a person or you as a group have gained respect?</u></p>	<p><u>8.3 How easy or how difficult is it for you to say what you think and do things on your own and to take decisions?</u></p>
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Quotes

9. So, coming to the end of the session, if you could give advice to other women who want to start projects, what would you say to them?

-
-
-
- I can briefly summarise what we covered in the discussion,
- Do you agree.....?.
- THANK YOU!!

FOKUSGROEP VRAE/ANTWOORDE-GIDS

Besonderhede van die fokusgroep

Naam van projek	
Datum van sessie	
Aantal deelnemers	
Plek van sessie	

- Bekendstellings
- Wie ek is
- Doel van sessie & hoe inligting gebruik gaan word. Daar is ook ander groepe
- Hierdie is 'n dink-en-praat sessie
Ek sal vrae vra oor wat julle dink en voel oor [naam van projek];
wat elkeen van julle dink, want elkeen se mening is belangrik.
- Wanneer ek hieroor gaan skryf, sal niemand se naam of selfs die projek se naam genoem word nie. So niemand sal weet waar en van wie ek die inligting gekry het nie.
[Almal verstaan?]
- Om mee te begin, kan ons om die tafel gaan en elkeen sê wat jy die meeste geniet om te doen wanneer jy nié by [naam van projek] werk nie.
- Ek gaan nou vir julle vrae vra oor julle ervaring as lede van [naam van projek]

REAKSIE OP VRAE

1. Wat dink julle is belangrik om mense te laat saam werk in 'n projek soos [naam van projek]?

<u>Sleutel reaksies</u>	<u>Aanhalings</u>

2. Hoe dink julle, hoeveel sê moet lede hê/hoe betrokke moet lede wees by die volgende sake van die projek

<u>2.1 Beplanning van werk/projekte</u>	<u>2.2 Verdeling/toedeling van werk</u>	<u>2.3 Hoe om geld/fondse in te kry vir die projek</u>

<p><u>2.4 Hoe om nuwe/meer lede te werf</u></p>	<p><u>2.5 Hoe om probleme te hanteer</u></p>	<p><u>2.6 Om oor leierskap te besluit</u></p>
<p><u>Enige ander sake?/ Aanhalings</u></p>		

3. Nou wil ek graag jul mening oor opleiding hoor. Sê my, wat dink julle van die volgende tipes van opleiding en hoe belangrik dink julle is dit?

<u>3.1 Opleiding wat mens leer om die werk van die projek te doen (bv. naaldwerk, bakkery, tuinbou, artikels maak)</u>	<u>3.2 Opleiding wat jou leer om die werk beter of anders te doen</u>	<u>3.3 Opleiding om te leer hoe om die projek en die werk wyer bekend te stel sodat meer mense kan weet van die projek en die werk wat edoen/wat verkoop word (bemarking)</u>

<u>3.4 Om te leer hoe om met geld te werk en hoe om vooruit te beplan oor hoeveel geld nodig gaan wees en hoe om dit te kry (begrotings) en hoe om met jou eie en die projek se geld te belê</u>	<u>3.5 Om te leer hoe om in spanne te werk en hoe werk tussen lede verdeel word (bestuur)</u>	<u>3.6 Om te leer hoe om verantwoordelikheid te neem, om te organiseer en vooruit te dink (leierskap)</u>
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Enige andertipe opleiding & Aanhalings

4. Mense leer op *verskillende maniere*. Wat is jul mening oor die volgende maniere waarop mens kan leer en waarom dink julle so?

<u>4.1 Op die plek waar jy werk, deur iemand wat jou wys hoe die werk gedoen moet word</u>	<u>4.2 Weg van die werkplek, soos in 'n klaskamer, waar iemand jou vertel hoe die werk gedoen moet word</u>	<u>4.3 Om in 'n groep te leer waar almal saam werk</u>

- 5. Nou sal ek graag wil hoor wat julle in die algemeen dink van vrouegroepe soos klubs en vroue organisasies.**
5.1 Wat dink julle is die waarde, indien enige vir iemand om te behoort aan vrouegroepe en organisasies?

6. Volgende sal ek graag jul mening wil hoor oor die betrokkenheid van amptelike liggame soos die munisipaliteit en staatsdepartemente of ander liggame by projekte soos [naam van projek]

6.1 Op watter maniere dink julle kan amptelike liggame soos die munisipaliteit, staatsdepartemente of soortgelyke liggame betrokke wees by projekte?

6.2 Bestaan daar enige samewerking/betrokkenheid tussen [naam van projek] en enige amptelike liggaam en wat behels dit?

7. My volgende vraag gaan oor idees – idees wat nuut en anders is

<p><u>7.1</u> <u>Wat is jul mening/hoe voel julle oor nuwe idees vir projekte?</u></p>	<p><u>7.2</u> <u>Hoe dink julle kan lede gehelp word om nuwe idees vir 'n projek te kry?</u></p>
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Aanhalings

8. Ons is nou naby die einde en ek wil elkeen van julle vra om terug te dink aan die tyd toe jy by [naam van projek] betrokke geraak het en hoe jy toe oor jouself gevoel het.

<p><u>8.1 Sal jy sê dat jy nou anders voel oor jouself? Indien jy nou anders voel, kan jy verduidelik hoe anders jy voel?</u></p>	<p><u>8.2 Wat van respek? Sou jy sê jy en julle as groep word ge-respekteer?</u></p>	<p><u>8.3 Hoe moeilik of maklik is dit vir jou om te sê wat jy dink en dinge op jou eie te doen en om besluite te neem?</u></p>
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Quotes

9. Nou dat ons aan die einde van die sessie gekom het, kan julle vir my sê, as julle vir ander vroue wat ook 'n projek wil begin, kon raad gee, wat se raad sou julle vir hulle gee?

- Ek som kortliks op wat in die gesprek gedek is...
- Stem julle saam?

BAIE DANKIE!!